

OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE

By

SRI SRI RAVISHANKAR

Volume: 2



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1. Gurudev, is life easy or difficult? In Buddhism, they say, 'The first truth is that life is difficult', and you say that life is joy. Which one is true? Don't tell me that both are right.

Sri Sri: Why? I will say that only! Both statements are true.

When a sad person feels that life is sorrow, if you tell him that life is joy, he will not be able to understand. He will only be able to understand that there is sorrow in life.

However, as he progress in knowledge, then he starts to realize, 'Where is sorrow?' Sorrow disappears as he progresses on the path of knowledge. The benefit of yoga and meditation is that it removes sorrow from your life.

Then you realize the truth that life is joy and you were unnecessarily worried.

Whenever you have been worried in the past, wake up and see, you will realize that you were worried unnecessarily. How many of you have felt like this? The results of the exams came out yesterday. However, a few days ago, you were so worried whether you would pass. Now, don't you feel that you unnecessarily wasted your time being worried? Everything came out well.

If you worry a lot, your feelings are dead; you are stuck in the head. Worrying makes your mind and heart inert and dull. Worries are like a rock in the head. Worry entangles you. Worry puts you in a cage.

By worrying, time is wasted and the mind gets disturbed. That is why it is said that when the event is over, only then we realize that worrying was unnecessary. The head worries and the heart feels. They cannot function at the same time.

When your feelings dominate, worry dissolves. When you feel, you do not worry.

Feelings are like flowers, they come up, they blossom and they die. Feelings rise, they fall and then disappear. When feelings are expressed, you feel relieved. When you are angry, you express your anger and the next moment you are all right. Or you are upset, you cry and you get over it.

Feelings last for some short time and then they drop, but worry eats at you for a longer period of time, and eventually eats you up.

Feelings make you spontaneous. Children feel, so they are spontaneous. Adults put brakes on their feelings and they start worrying. Worrying about anything obstructs action while feelings propel action.

Offering your worries is prayer and prayer moves you in feelings. When you think you are feeling too much then you start worrying about your feelings.

Worrying about negative feelings is a blessing because it puts the brakes on those feelings, preventing you from acting on them. Usually one never worries about positive feelings. Worries are uncertain. Worrying takes away your energy; you cannot think clearly when you worry.

Worries just came like a cloud and then disappeared. Only that which remains unchanged can be called as the truth, just like how the sky is the truth and the clouds just come and go.

Therefore, joy is the reality. Joy has always been a part of us, it is our nature.

2. Gurudev, what is the difference between Simaran (chanting) and meditation?

Sri Sri: Simaran is the beginning of meditation and samadhi is its end. Simaran means to remember. Just see, if you like someone and you remember that person some emotions come up isn't it. When the emotions overflow, then the mind becomes peaceful. The irritation in the mind becomes quiet. When the emotions overflow and make the mind peaceful that is meditation.

3. Gurudev, I am a Chartered Accountant and I go to the premises of many businessmen. I have noticed that when we treat them as family members they start taking advantage of that privilege. How to come out of that situation?

Sri Sri: Yes, you need some skill here. You must create a sense of togetherness and belongingness but don't let anyone take advantage of it. That is a skill.

You must not get carried away with your emotions but must use your intellect too. Don't become so gullible that people take advantage of you, nor must you be so strict and inflexible that people feel suffocated in your presence. Just like a string instrument plays only when the tension in the strings are perfect, similarly, you must maintain a perfect balance between your emotions and intellect.

4. Gurudev, I used to experience a lot of devotion, but it seems to have diminished with time. After listening to your talks on the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, I realized that it is not my nature. Could you please tell me how I can feel the same devotion again?

Sri Sri: Devotion is always there, but sometimes the clouds come in. Faith goes down and up with time, but if it goes down don't think that it is going to be down there forever. It will go up again.

This is the nature of the mind because the mind goes up and down, and it projects love and faith as if to be going up and down and it is related to Prana (life force energy). If the Prana

is high, then faith is high. If the Prana is low, then the mind will say, 'Oh, what is this? Am I at the right place? Am I doing the right thing?' A million doubts come to the mind.

So, when you are anchored to the centre core of your being, when you are so well anchored to the knowledge, only then that stability comes. That is why the saints in the past have prayed, 'Dear Lord, give me Achal Shraddha; unshakable faith'.

So many saints have sung and have asked for Achal Shraddha, Atoot Bhakti (uninterrupted devotion), unbroken love. This is all that we can ask for because even that is a gift! When you have love and devotion see what a transformation happens in life and when they breakdown, see what happens – a sort of inertia sets in. A feeling of hopelessness comes and life appears to be meaningless. It looks like every door is shut and everywhere one finds darkness. It is called as The Dark Night of the Soul in the Christian tradition. The soul has to pass through such a dark night.

But I would say it doesn't have to pass through it if you are a Yogi (a seeker on the spiritual path).

In the Yoga Sutras, I have spoken about the Nine Obstacles on the Path of Yoga and how you can overcome them?

Ekatattva abhyaasa – when you are adhering to one principle then you are able to sail through these obstacles; or what are appearing to be obstacles.

5. There are many situations or states of mind, but generally you can categorize them into three kinds:
 - a. When there is craving or longing. Longing for worldly or spiritual experiences.
 - b. When there is dullness. There is neither longing nor there is any interest in anything a sense of inertia in our mind. You just go on with inertia. This situation can set now and then in life.
 - c. When there is contentment, happiness and joy.

The purpose of all this celebration is to move from inertia to joy, to move from longing to contentment. It's so beautiful.

There are those who do not even look at their mind, they just keep working and working. Then there are others who keep looking at their own mind. Both are not good, take the middle path. Sometimes take a look at the mind, but not all the time. Do you see what I'm saying? Otherwise you will become self-centred, all the time thinking, 'What do I want?' Or 'I am feeling like this'.

Forget about how you feel, feelings keep changing. One minute it is good, next minute it is not good, so what! Move with valour and courage.

6. "Full moon night" and there was a poet sitting in a boathouse. He had a small lamp in front of him, a candle, he was writing poetry and it so happened there was a wind and the candle got blown out. When the candlelight was put off by the wind, at that moment the moon rays were reflecting in the home.

He suddenly said, "See, this small candle was obstructing my view of the moon". That moment there was an ecstasy, a joy.

The moonlight was so beautiful, "Ah!" He suddenly realized what he was missing. How come he couldn't see this moonlight before? It was there all the time, but he couldn't experience the joy of the moon, the fullness of the moon. A tiny candle was obstructing the view. See, you are looking at the sun or the space, and a small particle of dust is sufficient enough to cover your eyes, overshadow the whole view.

A particle of dust can take away from you the vision of the Infinity. A small particle of dust. One single thought in the mind can restrict the awareness, the totality of your awareness.

How big is your mind? How vast is your life? There are so many things in life. One small, little insignificant thought, insignificant thing, can clog and cloud your whole awareness. It can limit your mind and any limitation means a distance from that pure love. Any limitation keeps you a little away, farther away from Divine love".

7. When we see everything through the eyes of Viveka (sense of discrimination), then we feel that everything is changing. Can we also change our commitment?

Sri Sri: Yes and when can that happen? That can happen when Viveka awakens within us, and we realize that whatever commitment or promise we made was wrong and was made out of ignorance. When a commitment made does not bring any benefit or any good result, and then you can change your commitment. Also, you do not have the right to change this by yourself alone. This is why you should go to a Guru or a wise person and tell them your problem. Tell them that 'I was ignorant when I took up this commitment. Now I feel that this is wrong and futile. I seek your help and opinion on how to overcome this'.

A Guru or a wise person can understand and tell you the way to overcome this. They will be able to judge and ascertain whether your commitment was right or not; or whether you are trying to run away from your commitment to keep yourself in your comfort zone.

For example, you got married and have a family and children now, and suddenly you feel like running away from your responsibilities and becoming a Sanyasi (a renunciate or an ascetic).

When you go to a Guru or a wise person and tell them that you are thinking of doing so, they will immediately refuse and tell you not to do so. They will advise you to fulfill your responsibilities, raise your children well and after having fulfilled everything, then take Sanyas. If you want to give up your commitments in order to escape from your duties and responsibilities, then that is not correct, but if you realize that your commitment benefits neither you nor anyone else, then you consult your Guru or a near and dear one before giving up your commitment.

8. Love is the Essence of Life

There are two types of sadhaks or seekers. The first type of seekers is those having the capability and capacity to digest knowledge, and act according to knowledge. The other type of seekers are those who make mistakes, knowingly make mistakes and feel sorry for them later on. To repeat, the second type of sadhaks is those who make mistakes but who are pained by their own mistakes.

Even then, you are on the path of devotion, because the pain of not having done something that you should be doing or should have done will make you deep. If you cover your mistake, you will not even feel bad about it deeply. If you feel deeply bad about it, you feel your helplessness; your weakness that weakness itself can make you a prayerful seeker and then you will see whatever that was bothering you will fall away from you. Whatever habit you don't want to have, you'll feel that it has fallen off from you when you cry for help.

It is said, the Divine dawns in you when you cry for it, when you sing for it. When you sing, very quickly the Divine love comes back to you, dawns on you again; it comes to one's experiences. This is for sure!

The Divine is only waiting for you to dig a little deeper into yourself; that is all, because it can then fill you with much more nectar! The deeper you are, you'll be filled with more nectar. Divine is waiting to give you more. It wants you to create more space in you.

Cry from your soul for help. This is for those seekers who are weak. Those seekers who are strong, for them, with the power of knowledge they can sing with that joy of what they have achieved! Sing with the gratitude in your heart. Sing the glory of the Divine. The moment you sing in gratitude, in glory of the Divine, it immediately dawns in you, and fills you up again.

There are two aspects. One is a seeker who is grateful for all his growth and all that he has received, so grateful with the knowledge. The other is so helpless and weak due to own weakness and both will be helped and both can grow when they both sing, because in that singing, either with pain or with joy and gratitude, the Divine dawns and the experience happens, for sure!

Of all the truths in the world, Divine love alone is the supreme, because anything else you do, be it a righteous action, if it has no love behind it, that action is worthless. Suppose you have knowledge and the knowledge does not create love and totality of awareness in you, that knowledge is useless! How can you even have the knowledge if there is no love? If you love astronomy then you will go more deep into it.

Of the eternal truth, only love stands, and it is the most important and what is Love? Love is not just an emotion – “Oh, I love you so much”. That’s not love. Love is seeing that there is no difference. “I am you, you are me. You are part of me, I am part of you”. Feeling that oneness is love and it’s not just an intellectual understanding, but coming in the level of experience and living that.

Living life as joy and ease is spirituality. Spirituality is not some ritual, or doing something. It’s a very pleasant, uplifted state of your being and seeing that the whole world is all spirit or consciousness. Seeing that there is one Big Mind among all the human beings, animals and all the life in the world is spirituality, and that Love is the essence of Life.

9. Gurudev, what to choose between these two things: life in this beautiful world with a Guru like you or liberation and ultimate union with the Divine?

Sri Sri: You can have both; this does not have to be a choice. You can lead a happy life in this beautiful world, and you can get liberation also. Main thing is, don’t be a football of other people’s opinions.

Many times, you do things because others want you to do it. No need! Be strong in yourself and see life from a bigger perspective.

You don’t know who your real friend is; this is the difficulty.

In the world, what has happened, you think someone is your friend and you show off to them, ‘Oh, I got this, and I got that’, and they are jealous. They are not happy about it. If you show that you are good, and then they are not happy, and if you show you are not good, then also they don’t care for you.

It’s sort of a dilemma that most people face. If you show you are really good in something, they are not happy, they are jealous and if you don’t prove yourself, they don’t think you are up to the mark, and so they don’t look up to you.

So in any situation, it is not worth wasting your time on what those people are thinking about you. Do you get it? Let them think what they want. If they think you are an angel, fine. If they think you are a devil, fine. If they think you are dumb, foolish, or whatever; you should feel, ‘Okay, go ahead and think what you want, I don’t care!’

If you go with this feeling, you will carry some weight.

If others think you are a failure, okay, let them think. What big success have they got? People, who are successful, look at them, they are not happy at all. They are so miserable. See, not everybody is successful in every field. Some are successful in some aspects. So, never mind, success or failure. You be centered, and be happy.

Each one of you should remain as a center of happiness. You should be radiating happiness, and when anyone comes to you, give them love, compassion, and happiness. Then we can bring a big change in the world.

I always say, you kids who are always participating in competitions, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, but if you have done art of living, you don't lose at all.

You know why? It is because either you win, or you make others win.

When your dad or mom plays games with you, what do they do? They could win all the time, but do they win all the time? No, they enjoy making you win, isn't it?

So in the same way, either you win or you make others win. If you are more mature, you make others win also.

No, don't think that way. Like I said, two options, either you win or you make others win. Don't lose your heart. Each one of us on this planet is unique; so don't compare yourself with others. You don't know how much capability you have. When it will come to the surface, nobody knows.

Do you know of Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the Hare Krishna movement?

He was an ordinary worker in some garment office. He retired at 60 and went into spirituality. He met a Guru and the Guru said, 'Yes, you should go and spread Krishna's message in the world'. At the age of 75, he travelled in a boat, went to New York and stayed in somebody's basement and started a movement. Till he was 75, nobody knew who Prabhupada was. At that age, he made the Bhagvatam popular to thousands of people.

Be happy and spread happiness.

I want you to go deep in knowledge, and be one of those who are a giver to the world; one who radiates happiness, knowledge and wisdom. This is what I want you to do.

Among the billions of people on the planet, even if a few radiate wisdom, love and happiness, you can heal this planet. It is a much needed healing. You are very precious to this planet, at this time.

So nobody knows when what will come out of you. So don't underestimate yourself. You are very unique. You come to satsang, and do meditation, that itself says a lot. It will bring such positive vibrations to you, and to the world. Get into the seva team, and do some service.

10. How can one be spiritually connected on all levels of consciousness at all times without any doubt?

Sri Sri: Whatever is there is all spirit. Spirit is nothing but energy. So, if you understand in that perspective, everything is made up of energy. You are always connected with God. There is not a single moment when you are separate from God or spirit.

Even if you don't want, you can't be unconnected. Even if you want to be disconnected, you can't. That's God that is spirit. So, spiritual plane is not a moral plane a mental plane. It's beyond those. It is ever existent and they're all the time, all the time. Trying to connect to it, we accumulate pressure. We feel we are not connected and all spiritual practices are to bring home this awareness, "Yes, I am connected". Recognition, you are that already.

Now, what is the doubt and when does the doubt arise? Your doubt strengthens your faith. You never seem to doubt your dreams. Only in waking state of consciousness your doubt arises. Have you observed this? In a dream you are on horseback and the horse is flying in the sky. You don't ever doubt whether it is possible or not. You never doubt it. In dream there is no doubt, everything seems to be okay.

Doubt is the sign of intellect. Whenever intellect pokes in, it gives rise to a doubt. Only, we have to understand this phenomenon and your doubt cannot be answered by some one else by questioning. Impossible, every effort to clear a doubt will give rise to so many such doubts. Doubt is a big question mark. This question mark is also so closely connected to the point where sorrow also arises in life.

Have you watched or observed or asked why you are so happy? Have you asked why there are beautiful things around? Why there are so many colors and such wonderful things in creation? But when there is a pinprick and pain you ask why of all people, this happens to you? Why this difficulty? Why this pain or suffering? You can drop every question, you can drop every doubt. That's a step of the enlightenment.

A Master or teacher never answers all your questions. He just sees that you could drop your doubt. Every question can be transformed into a wonder. See, what is the difference between a question and a wonder?

Think on this. "Oh, See! How colorful this is!" You are questioning there but does not expect an answer. That's a wonder. Question that arises in joy is wonder. Wonder always comes out of joy because it is your nature. You are joy.

Question comes out stress, tension, sorrow, and an answer is given. See, many people go to ask different questions and then they are not really satisfied with the answers. That will produce more questions in the mind. So, it's a multiplication of questions over a period of time. 'ANUTTAROBABA', the answerless. The answerless is a state of joy. That is the spiritual plane where you wonder every moment, wonder what is there? What is this? Wonder brings joy in life. When you have nothing to wonder and you are intellectualizing everything and you have understood everything, there is no joy in life; it is as good as death.

Children when they are so enthusiastic, they keep asking questions, they keep wondering. They are not particular about what answer you give. Whatever is said, they are happy with it, they are satisfied. In fact, they are wondering. They are wondering at everything. A child wonders looking at its own hands and fingers.

A professor, who thinks he knows everything, doesn't wonder about anything; see his face, see his life-it's so dull. He knows everything there is to life; there is no energy, no enthusiasm.

One who knows and knows not, is wise. This is a saying in India. One who knows not and knows that he knows is a philosopher. It's like a psychologist. Psychologist has never studied his own psyche, his own mind function, never meditated and never gone into the depth of mind. Simply studying about it in books will not help. A true psychologist should go within and see every level of consciousness and experience them. Then, he has really studied psychology. Everywhere in the world they simply study but not practice psychology, experience what consciousness is. So, drop this idea that you want to be connected.

Every spiritual experience cannot come with intellectual analysis. It can only come out of feeling it. You feel in the depth of your heart that you are connected and if you feel in the depth of your heart you are not connected, do some deep meditation, do some breathing, Kriya and the experience will tell you, "Yes, I am connected".

11. How do I attract abundance in my life?

Sri Sri: When you don't crave for abundance, it comes to you. If you're hankering for it, saying, 'Oh, I want abundance', then it remains far away. Just relax! Know that what you need, you will get.

There is a saying in Sanskrit on how to make abundance comes to you. It says, 'Udyoginam purushasimham upaiti Lakshmi'. Udyoginam means putting 100% effort. Purushasimham upaiti Lakshmi, means having the confidence and centeredness, like a lion.

See, a lion does not run around like a chicken; have you seen how a lion sits? You should have that centeredness and confidence. The one thing a lion does not do is, put effort; it is not hardworking. Udyoginam purushasimham upaiti Lakshmi. If you are hardworking and

centered, when you are in touch with your inner spiritual strength, then Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, will simply come to you.

So, abundance comes when you are centered, confident, in touch with your inner spiritual strength, and hardworking, rather smart working.

12. How do I get rid of my ego, which is so strong?

Sri Sri: Oh, for heaven's sake, don't do that! Don't try to get rid of your ego.

If you find that your ego is your biggest problem; keep it in your pocket, or in the purse. Let it be. If your ego is bothering you, allow yourself to be humiliated thoroughly. Will you do that? That is it! The biggest problem is that you don't want to be humiliated. Get humiliated, and you will see that the ego disappears.

In life, if anyone anywhere humiliates you, know that it is only a plan to soften you. It is a blessing; you should walk away or through the situation with a smile.

To begin with, you may feel very uncomfortable, but there will be a shift in you, with which you will be so amazed. Then, nobody will ever be able to take the smile, the love and the compassion from within you.

We should never be shy of humiliation, or of being criticized. If criticism comes, take it.

Do you know, many times we hold our hands so tight; this is what I am, this is mine, mine, and mine! And the moment someone criticizes us, we withdraw. We are so paranoid about the criticism of others. These are the weakest people, I tell you.

If someone criticizes you, welcome it! If there is something in it, take it. They are taking the risk of losing your friendship, and giving you a comment, or criticism.

You should know that people are there to help you in the world. Don't see people as enemies. The foolish will look at the world as filled with enemies and hostile people. The wise will look at the world as filled with friends, and think that people are there to help.

From a wise persons' angle, see that anyone who criticizes you is doing something good to you. They are showing you your mistake, taking the risk of losing their friendship with you.

Otherwise, the common man would just say, 'Okay, why should we lose the friendship of such and such a person? Just say good things, and bye. There is no need to point out your weaknesses'.

So, whenever someone criticizes you, listen to it. If the criticism has some substance, take

it. If it is coming out of jealousy, be compassionate towards them. That is their problem; they are working out their own jealousy. They are pouring out their frustration on you and in some sense; you are just helping them to empty their mind of frustration.

If they are saying it out of compassion, out of friendship and love, then you take it in that sense. So, you should be able to give constructive criticism from a happy calm mind, and be able to take criticism from the same mind. This will transform your ego.

13. Gurudev, how do I find a life partner? I feel I've tried everything with no luck. What do I do differently?

Sri Sri: Well, I'm not an expert in this. You have to ask this question to somebody who has been in many relationships and finally got someone who they are happy with. They will give you their expert advice. One thing I would say is, if you're looking for a partner; know that you are there to contribute to their life. If you are looking for a partner to get something out of them and they also want to get something from you, then this 'want to get' will pull the two of you apart, but if your whole intention is to support, guide, and contribute to the other, then you will find that such a partnership will go on forever.

14. Through hypnotism we can see our past lives? Is it true?

Sri Sri: Yes we can, it's a therapy. You come to know what is in the sub-consciousness mind. They call it regression therapy and for some people it is beneficial also. In Art of Living also we have the Eternity Process.

15. How did Lord Krishna say the Bhagavad Gita to Arjun in such a short time?

Sri Sri: There are many dimensions. For you to remember the experiences of 10 years, do you need 10 years? No you just need 10 mins. To remember what you did from morning till evening do you need that much time to remember? You will just need a few minutes. In the same way to give the knowledge a special power is used, a special force gives it.

16. Parents have done the course but they are not yet in the spiritual field. What should I do?

Sri Sri: They will come. Already they are there in the spiritual field. There is nobody who is not in the spiritual field. Everybody wants happiness and peace. Whoever doesn't want this is not in the spiritual field. Is there anybody who doesn't want peace? Who doesn't want happiness? Who doesn't want love? Is there anybody like that? People are running behind love! Everybody needs these three things. They are all stuck in small things, but they will all rise above it. You have patience and meditate. You just be relaxed. They will come, they may

take some time.

17. Sometimes things happen and my faith is shaken.

Sri Sri: Doesn't matter, let it shake! Ultimately faith will win. The faith that will come after all the doubts will be very strong. When you put a pole in the ground, you shake it and see if it is strong or not. Faith is inside us and it can never be erased. However much you can doubt, you doubt! Don't leave any effort on that. Because doubt is always for the good.

18. It was easier in the olden times to get peace in ashram, than now.

Sri Sri: Be in the present moment. Listen to the knowledge points. There were lesser people in the older days now there are more people. When there are more people here, there is more possibility for you to share your wisdom share your knowledge and develop patience! You should also grow. You can't be stuck thirty years back. Thirty years back you were interacting with ten people.

Today you are interacting with one thousand people. So we should expand as the time goes. You should not just shrink into a shell. We have said Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. We have accepted the whole world as your family. Then you should rise up to that ideal. Feel at home with anyone and everybody.

Don't always focus on what is comfortable for you and what is not comfortable for you. You should get out of your comfort zone and bring comfort to others. This is what is important. Ask how many people are comfortable with you. As you expand you become friendly with different people from different parts of the world. Here there is a mix of people from all religions and from every state of India. So their behaviours will be different, their language is different, their food habits are different, their mannerisms are different. So be willing to learn and bring comfort to others.

19. Getting love is painful, not getting love is even more painful and maintaining love is also painful! Which pain should I choose?

Sri Sri: Choice is yours, blessing is mine! If you want to choose pain you are most welcome, but I tell you, choose bigger pain than all these small things. Love for the whole humanity. Love for the planet, love for the animals. Animals do have rights to exist. You have no right to take their life away. So worry about all those things. Look into the eyes of those pigs, those chickens. Look into the eyes of the cows, calves, and dogs. This entire creation is filled with love and how people can slaughter that, just to fill their little tummy? It is not even healthy! This is unfortunate. We should worry about that.

20. If our fortune is decided by the supreme power then how much responsible are we for our own deeds?

Sri Sri: Who said the supreme power decides your fortune? You decide your fortune”.

21. How can I stop telling lies and be open with my parents?

Sri Sri: You are already tired of telling lies, that’s why you want to stop it. Good, so you are on the right track. A point will come when you say, ‘My god, I can’t handle any more’, because if you keep telling so many lies you’ll forget what you’ve said before. Truth is freeing and relieving, but you can’t say it to all the people at all times. You need wisdom and discrimination. There is this tendency in some parts of the world where people feel that ‘I have to be truthful, I have to tell everything’. Yet you don’t know how much truth is there in your perceptions.

I will give you an example of an incident that happened in the Canadian ashram. An elderly couple came here with their daughter who watched some of the shows in which a child said, ‘my father touched me here and my mother did so and so’.

Suddenly this girl had an idea that her father had touched her inappropriately when she was two years old. The parents were devastated, to the extent that the father wanted to commit suicide and the daughter started believing this and said to her father, ‘You prove to me that you haven’t done this’. They came here, they were crying and the father was saying, ‘Would I ever even think of that?’

This is true for many people. We impose something on our conscious; our psyche and we think this has happened to us. You feel that you are a victim and you find some glory in being a victim, because the victims were glorified on TV and the young girl thought in her subconscious mind, I should also be like that.

If it really happened and the child remembers it, then it is a different issue, but imagining that things are happened to you, that too when you were two year old. How can a two-year-old baby remember? It has to be at least six or seven years old to remember any such thing. It was so painful to see such a happy family completely destroyed. Our perception many times may not be correct.

22. In a relationship, if one doesn’t keep their commitments, what should the other do?

Sri Sri: Forgive them! Forgive them once, twice, thrice, four times. Then bark. If that doesn’t work, walk out.

23. Is the relationship with Guru eternal & we get same guru in every lifetime?

Sri Sri: Why to postpone for next lifetime? Who knows, what you'll become in next lifetime? Do your work, don't postpone it. I may not be available in next lifetime or in between till you get me.

24. You set the challenge for yourself and fulfill it. This is the way to increase your confidence and capacity.

25. Gurudev, are you right or left handed?

Sri Sri: I handle everything in the right manner. I suppose I don't leave anything, so there is nothing left behind. So there's nothing left and I suppose I'm right.

26. We may not understand everything that is happening in the pooja, we just sit with eyes closed or eyes open and enjoy all that is happening. That is what is called shraddha, which means falling in love with the unknown.

27. "What is the difference between worry and tension?"

Sri Sri: "You tell me". "Well, when your wife is pregnant, that's worry and when your lover is pregnant, that's tension".

The crowd found this hilarious. "So, are you in worry or in tension?" Sri Sri's question had people falling over with laughter but nobody was prepared for the moment when the man said, "Both".

The evening was punctuated with funny exchanges like this along with deep knowledge and an air of celebration as usual.

28. How do you cope with taking on the burdens of people all over the world?

Sri Sri: You must tell yourself that you are an instrument. You are a part of the universe. Let things come and go and they will be no burden to you. It is certainly possible and you also have that capability.

29. I start to do a lot of things, but I don't get to complete. Can you tell me a way how can I improve the situation?

Sri Sri: If you want to do, you can do anything. It has to come from within. With the determination, 'I will do this job, and I will see to it that it gets completed'. This commitment from within will help you, and get you through. Got it? Nobody can do the job other than you.

So, take up with small things and follow it through, and then you will get the confidence. That prepares you to take up big tasks. You know, why do you drop things? Because you think they are not important, but there is nothing important or unimportant in life, everything has importance. So, even if something looks unimportant, you say, "I want to finish it, and I will finish it". Then you will be able to enhance your commitment.

30. How to overcome desire?

Sri Sri: This is another desire! What we need to know is that a desire fulfilled takes you back to the same place you were before the desire arose.

Just imagine your state of mind before a desire arose in you, after all the circus of having a desire and getting it fulfilled, you come back to that same place.

First of all drop this more. More devotion, more gratitude, more joy, more happiness, we need to drop this, 'I want more and more.

First you are thinking, 'I want more money, more joy, more happiness and more pleasure'.

Then you shifted your tendency to wanting more peace, more knowledge, more of this and more of that.

As long as you are in the run for more, you are not going to settle. Unless you settle, there is neither peace nor grace. Got it? So somewhere you should take this whole 'I want more' thing and dump it and say 'okay that is it!

It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, 'Yadrccha-labha-santusto Dvandvatito Vimatsarah'.

Whatever is coming to you, you should have some level of contentment and with contentment comes gratitude. If you are discontent, how can you be grateful?

If you are grumbling, you can't be grateful, and if you are not grateful, how can there be grace? Do you see what I am saying? It all fits one into another.

So now, don't ask me how can one be more grateful? Just stop complaining! Know that this

whole life is like a dream. It is all going to end and everything is going to finish one day. This very awareness will bring a shift in you.

'This story is going to end someday and the curtains are going to fall', knowing this suddenly a shift happens from the run to having more to contentment. It will come to that.

31. I have been told since childhood that eating non – vegetarian is like committing a sin because we are killing helpless animals. Is it so?

Sri Sri: Don't think those who eat non – vegetarian are sinful. It is only that tamasic tendencies are encouraged when one eats non – vegetarian.

32. What should be one's goal in life: money, fame, position or something else?

Sri Sri: Contentment.

33. Does contentment make you lazy?

Sri Sri: What do you think? There is a lot of difference between laziness and contentment. One who is contented has more energy. Is there energy in a lazy person?

34. Do yogis have a weekend?

Sri Sri: In between lifetimes!

35. What is the relationship between Seeker, Guru and the Divine?

Sri Sri: The beginning, middle and end of a same line. It is the seed, the plant and the tree.

36. What to do when suddenly one experiences a state of emptiness? What to do when all meanings fade away? Please bless me!

Sri Sri: Yes, bless you! All these feelings and emotions come and go. Sometimes you feel so dry like everything has disappeared. All your good feelings: love, dedication suddenly goes away; but suddenly they appear too. So these are just passing phases in life, just keep moving on.

37. What is more important - faith in ourselves or faith in others?

Sri Sri: Both are necessary. However, add one more. That is, faith in God.

38. Since we surrender our botheration, pain and problems to you, are we running away from our responsibilities?

Sri Sri: No! You should have a balance there. You give your 100% and then leave the rest. Surrender does not mean running away from responsibilities, it is a sense of assurance in you that yes things are going to be well.

39. What really is the mind without thoughts?

Sri Sri: It is nothing. A bundle of thoughts is what the mind is. When the thinking stops, that is the no mind state. That is what happens. It happens for a few moments in meditation and then you feel very good.

40. What is greater – moksha or love and gratitude?

Sri Sri: Love and gratitude cannot happen without some degree of freedom within. Moksha is freedom. They go hand in hand. To the degree of freedom that you experience, to that degree you feel gratitude.

41. If a person thinks he is good for nothing in whatever he does, how should he move ahead in life?

Sri Sri: Just be here for a little while and know that God doesn't create garbage. Everyone who is created on this planet is good for something.

42. How realistic is it for a person to become enlightened in one lifetime? Even Siddhas have to take a few births to get enlightened. Why is it so difficult to get enlightened?

Sri Sri: It is not difficult. It is challenging! You don't have to be very special. You can have it right now in this room.

43. What is the secret of a peaceful and successful life?

Sri Sri: Accept the people and situations as they are and always be in the present moment.

Do not keep thinking of what happened in the past or what will happen in the future.

44. Gurudev, How important is it that we act for planet? What can we do? How do we sustain?

Sri Sri: We need to wake up and see that planet is our home and when you go higher, you don't see borders. Borders are our understanding, our illusions. There really is no border. Sky knows no border, clouds know no border, and wind also knows no border. The elements of this earth have no borders. The planet is one home for everyone. We are all one family. So, we need to think from a broader perspective. Which is the correct perspective? That the whole planet belongs to us.

We cannot dump our nuclear waste into some other place. The effect of dumping any waste anywhere in Earth will again come back to us! We cannot keep one place clean and pure in isolation. It is not possible because the air will carry! We have to care for the whole planet.

We have to make the entire planet organic. We have created so many types of viruses on this planet, because we meddled with nature. We have destroyed many species on this planet because we have not taken good care of it, and our food production has gone so low. That it's going to be a very heavy thing on the coming generation, you know! I think every individual; every human being on the planet will have to take responsibility of not polluting the planet, of continuing sustainable development by planting more trees, preserving our lakes, preserving water. It is so important!

Water scarcity is another big issue in the world. Millions of people are into starvation! So, we need to have a global picture and care for the whole planet. Of course, we need this is most important!

45. Gurudev, I got divorced four years ago and got remarried less than a year ago. I see that the same situations are repeating in my life. Is this karma or am I not able to apply the knowledge?

Sri Sri: You will know this better.

See what mistakes you are making. Do you have acceptance? Do you serve a person? Why would someone not like to be with you if you are a fountain of joy and enthusiasm?

Why would someone not like to be with you if you are full of love and service, if you are hollow and empty, if you are in wisdom and knowledge, everyone will want to spend time with you. So keep yourself soaked in knowledge, day and night.

Sleep with knowledge, and when you wake up, listens to knowledge again. Read Yog Vasistha, Ashtavakra Gita and Bhakti Sutras.

We have been given such precious knowledge. Just one sutra at a time is enough. For example, 'Yogash chitta vritti nirodhah, Tada drashtuh svarupe avashthanam', establishing in the seer and not in the scenery is yoga. Dwelling on such knowledge, one can move back to the seer, recollecting that all this is scenery.

'The body is the scenery, let me find the seer', this takes you back in, to the source immediately. It makes you realize that the body is all empty. There is emptiness outside, and everything is empty.

Look at a cup; there is space inside and outside. The body is a cup; you are a supatra (a good cup), a mind which is hollow and empty.

Kupatra is when the mind is filled with all rubbish things. You are a supatra, a good cup, which is free, clean inside and outside. When you realize this, immediately you are able to relax; every cell in your body starts relaxing. All the garbage leaves, all negative thoughts disappear.

You are a clean vessel, hollow and empty. How joyful this state of mind is. Then you can work 18-20 hours a day, without feeling tired and bogged down; the mind is fresh. Every day, you should rest well for about six hours.

46. Gurudev, you mentioned that the trick is to cut the connection between thought and me. What makes us feel that the thought is mine?

Sri Sri: In Sanskrit this is called tadatma (identification).

When you are watching a movie you are so identified with the movie that when something happens to the hero or heroine, you start crying. Doesn't it happen?

It used to happen in villages, when the villain was attacking the hero, the entire audience would throw slippers and stones on the screen. Many times the owners of the theatre would have to come and announce, 'This is a movie; please don't throw slippers and stones on screen because it will get spoilt'.

This is what identification is the mind identifies so much with the scenery. Same way, when you are watching a movie and if you are intelligent, you know it's just a movie. You don't throw stones at the television because the villain is hurting your hero.

In the same manner, your emotions and thoughts come and go. It is your strong association with the thoughts that puts you in a cage. Identification is that cage. Knowing that all these are just thoughts and detaching from that identification is liberation.

We all do this to some extent; everybody does it. You don't act on every thought that you

have. If you consider all thoughts as your own, you will go mad, but we consider many of our thoughts as our own. We consider ourselves to be the thought. It is only when you sit and go into meditation that you start becoming a witness and realize that these are just passing thoughts. We are able to disassociate ourselves from most of our thoughts; they just become like a passing cloud.

Of course, when such a cloud comes it also stirs some emotions. Thoughts and emotions are linked. When a bad thought comes, it stirs a bad emotion. When you are a witness the emotion also stays for a minute and then it vanishes, but if you identify with it then it stays longer. It can't stay forever but it stays for longer, it drags the whole thing a little longer.

47. What is the secret of happiness?

Sri Sri: The secret to happiness is to do seva and not have any wishes. The more you do seva the more you are happy. The third thing is knowledge.

48. Is it really and possible to be happy and smiling like you? I promise I won't compete you.

Sri Sri: I want competition. In fact you should tell me that you will always compete with me. There is an ancient saying: a teacher's pride is when the student challenges. Challenge means not in a bad way. I will do this. The teacher loves to be defeated by a student. That is the pride of the teacher.

Shishya dichye parajayam.

How to keep smiling?

What rob you of your smile are unpleasant events. Events that do not bring comfort or which appear to give you misery. When you realize that you are much bigger than events that occur, then the smile on your face will not vanish.

Second when you know that there is someone to guide you, take care of you, then also your smile will not vanish.

Third when you know that you are here to give. That gives you strength to move through moments when you cannot smile.

49. I am a 17-year-old girl and I feel very lonely.

Sri Sri: You should have no time other than to develop your skill. Do bhastrika and do exercise and keep on the run.

50. Should I continue reading tarot cards? As people told that it connects me to lower level of spirit

Sri Sri: If you ask me you should quit.

51. I told my boss, I have faith in Bhagavad Gita, since then my boss has stopped paying me my salary. What should I do?

Sri Sri: Tell them that Bhagavad Gita also talks about fighting for your rights.

52. How can married people be dispassionate?

Sri Sri: When there is fight, when there is some discussion that bothers you, be dispassionate. A variragi lives in the present moment.

53. What is the importance of donating food?

Sri Sri: Any donation is about sharing and living and this is a Divine quality.

54. What is the effect of effort on karma?

Sri Sri: Karma is associated with every facet of life. With knowledge, bhakti (devotion), karma is lessened. Everything else increases karma.

55. I have acquired a lot of skills doing seva, but it does not help in practical life.

Sri Sri: Whatever you learn in life will help you sometime or the other.

56. Is the human race progressing?

Sri Sri: Yuga creates a climate, a season but effort of human being should continue.

57. "A King doesn't have any friends and a Saint has no enemies. Having friends is a loss for the King and having enemies is harmful for a Saint. If a King has friends then favoritism comes in. So you should not go too close to a King and not go far from a Saint. The one who goes close to a King will stand to lose and the one who goes away from a Saint will also stand to lose. If a King has friends there will be no justice, equality to all".

58. "Don't see too much meaning in every little thing. Then you are not living life, you are simply stuck in concepts and ideas. You should just let go. Not to find a cause, reason behind everything, because your understanding is very limited. As we grow our understanding changes, our mind changes, our perception changes. So with whatever level of perception you have now, you analyze too much and you get stuck to that particular perception, again you are unable to let go. As your perception changes, your holding on to old paradigms. Not analyzing at all is no good, but too much analysis is also no good".

59. Even if I give my 100% and it doesn't happen, what do I do?

Sri Sri: Know something better is in store for you, so move on. Keep moving.

60. My 14 yr. old son is very stubborn. I shout at him but then feel guilty about it.

Sri Sri: That's fine there is nothing wrong in it. Father and mother at times they will get angry, they should get angry, that is natural.

61. If there any word or sentence that can used for all age groups and at all occasions?

Sri Sri: (Someone shouts "Jai Gurudev!" in the audience) She has said, "Jai Gurudev". That's a good thing to say at any time for anything! Good morning, good night, welcome, goodbye for everything you can say it. When things happen then you say "Jai Gurudev", when things don't happen then also you can say "Om Namah Shivayah" or "Jai Gurudev", but the tone of "Om Namah Shivayah" says everything!

62. You said that you create confusion in devotees and make them grow. But I am 69 yrs old, I will die with Karpanya Dosha (weakness of heart) if you don't answer my question of Yoga Vasishtha!

Sri Sri: If you have read Yoga Vasishtha, you'll know that you will never die! How can you say you will die? You will never die. Read it again (laughs).

63. Please explain the significance of Shayana Pradakshina (lying and rolling).

Sri Sri: If your head is filled with too many thoughts, just lie down a floor and keep rolling. You will something happen when you roll, something happens in your body. When circulation improves, mind also feels better. This is a good place to do Shyana Pradakshina (pointing to Amphitheater stage). Move from here to there, there to here, experience for yourself, how there is a change in your mind. I used to make people do it in some of the

courses in the olden days. People would roll down the hill.

In Canada there used to be a grass hill goes to the top of the hillock, it was very safe as there were no stones or anything around. It's all lawn all the way, only grass. So everybody would lie down and roll down. So the fear, anxiety, all these would collapse. All will go away.

64. I am not able to accept the killing of lakhs of people by terrorists.

Sri Sri: Yes this is a big problem in the world that is why the Gita is relevant. It never says if they slap show the other cheek and just accept it, no. Gita says if he slaps you, you take your bow and arrow and shoot him right there, but not with vengeance or with hatred but with calmness, with the intention of teaching a lesson to that person. That's why Krishna said, go and fight with the evil, established in yoga.

65. Everything in creation is vibration. As a liberated Saint how do you see everything vibrating?

Sri Sri: yes the whole universe is nothing but vibrations, wave functions. Particles don't exist, things don't exist. Everything is just waves. That's why everything is made up of just one thing. That's what is there in Yoga Vasishtha, Ashtavakra Gita, Vedanta – the whole universe is made up of just one thing.

66. Is the food, lifestyle, friends shape the habits and character of a person, and then what is the way out?

Sri Sri: Not very much, to some extent. They can all influence you to some extent only.

67. If the sole purpose of life is liberation, then why do we take birth and fall into the cycle of karma in the first place?

Sri Sri: To have some fun and give me some job and you too! There could be many such questions like if the water has to come down through rains then it is better that it stays in the ground? Why should trees shed all their leaves and then come back again with new leaves? Within six months, they come up again with leaves, right?

68. Why do some animals not have a natural death? Why do people kill them?

Sri Sri: Yes that's wrong, I don't approve of people killing any animals. Have you seen many migratory birds have arrived in the Ashram? Lot of storks and pelicans. Lots of them in the lake. First time so many of them have come. They like a good environment; birds have

arrived here, that's very good.

69. I get a lot of recognition and reverence from people outside. At home I don't get the same.

Sri Sri: You give comfort to people. Don't question them and don't expect that sort of comfort from them. We should not expect people at home to sweet talk you all the time, give you pep talks. Life is like that. Couples of days you get angry, couple of days you are happy, you laugh, you cry, you smile, exhibit all emotions. This is all a normal phenomenon. Just don't sit and worries about it, there are so many other things you can do. No point in wasting time trying to change people at home.

70. What are the criteria for considering anyone as an Avatar?

Sri Sri: First you should understand what Avatar means. Avatar means descending of Divinity. Wherever you find knowledge, there Divinity has descended. The formless to be seen in form, this is what is there in Srimad Bhagavatam. It says the Divine as descended even in swans, in the fire, in the trees, in all animals. The entire creation is nothing but the manifestation of Divinity. From wherever you get a message you call that as Avatar. So the sage Dattatreya has noted twenty different forms of life. He received knowledge from a swan, so swan he said swan is a form of Divinity.

You should know that God is present in every particle of the Universe. The cheapest commodity available is Divinity! In earth, water, fire, air, ether. Everything is made up of one vibration that is Brahman that is Divinity that is God. So when that Divinity is shining through knowledge, giving knowledge, kindling love, then that one considers as an Avatar.

71. It is said that everything is a dream. In whose dream I am? In yours or you are in mine, or we both are in a common dream?

Sri Sri: Well, what is a dream? It is an impression of memory. You wake up now this very moment, the entire past appears as a dream. It is memory, an impression. So everything is an impression in the mind. What you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste, you touch, all this forms an impression in the consciousness. So as long as you are all in each other's dreams, everything is ok.

72. I have a habit of living in a fantasy world. I know it is a defence mechanism. How to overcome it?

Sri Sri: The moment you realize it is a fantasy, you've already overcome it! The moment you have labelled it as my fantasy world', you have already come to the shore. You are no longer

drowning in it. Don't worry about it. It's good to have dreams sometimes. Think big, have dreams, but at the same time don't lose the touch of reality. You know dance happens not with both feet stuck to the ground. One is firmly on the ground the other is up in the air.

In life also, you should see the practicality, not lose the ground reality, at the same time you should dream something different, something bigger, something higher, whatever appears to be some times impossible. If you're dreaming something that is totally impossible, then you are not true to yourself. That is that grey area, you don't think it is totally impossible and you don't think it is totally possible also. Somewhere in between, you think "I can make it, I can do it", that is the dream that you should hold on to.

73. It is said to be without Sankalpa (intention), then why do we take Sankalpas in Pujas?

Sri Sri: Yes, to become Nirsankalpa, Nirvikalpa! Sankalpa, vikalpa, keeps coming our mind all the time. If you don't let go all the Sankalpa, you cannot become a Yogi. So in order to get the ability to let go of all the sankalpas, all these pujas, seva, all this is done, to get to that. It is not that you must do it. All the sankalpas in pujas are for focusing our attention in one direction. Life cannot happen without any Sankalpa at all.

In life you have to take Sankalpa. You want to even sit here, listen to knowledge is Sankalpa. Or to go and have food is a Sankalpa. Want to do something good is a Sankalpa. Want to do Seva is a Sankalpa and wanting to get free of Sankalpas is again another Sankalpa! In Upanishads it is said you need both Vidya and Avidya. Paravidya and Apraravidya both. Everyone has to take both in a balanced way and go ahead.

74. Can we control time, if so how?

Sri Sri: Ya, ya, you can turn the watch back and forth (laughs). You can keep the time and if you keep the time, that is controlling the time. Got it? Can you keep the time, can you be on time? Fix a time and move with that? Certain events in your life you can control, certain events you cannot. Life is a combination of both free will and destiny. You cannot say I have control over everything and you can't say I have no control over anything. Both are not correct.

I'll give you a simple example, after 21 your height cannot be increased. But your weight you can change any time! You can grow horizontally, but you can't grow vertically. You can shrink also. If you weigh 100 kilos, you cannot say I can't change it. Why not? Get on to a treadmill, walk and eat less. You see in one month you can reduce your weight. Right? So certain things you can change.

Similarly you cannot stop the rain from coming, but it is your choice whether to get wet or not get wet. You can put on a raincoat, take an umbrella, you don't even go out of the home,

you won't get wet. So certain things you can change, certain things you cannot. So life is not all fatalistic.

75. Can you please explain Avabodha, Bodha concept?

Sri Sri: Some things you understand through intellect, some things are beyond intellect, you feel it. You can give talk about love, but a dog will tell you what love is. So one understands through intellect that is also necessary. Another that comes to you as an experience, through vibrations. In life both are essential.

76. Yesterday you had said one should not get too close to a Raja and not to stay away from the Guru. What should be the attitude of the King with the Guru?

Sri Sri: King should not assume himself as a King all the time. When he comes to a Guru, he should become like an ordinary human being. You know from Gurus eyes if you see, everybody is part of himself. So it is all just roles one plays.

Everyone should remember, first of all we are all part of one Divine light, one human race and so we cannot afford to be stuck in a role, we should keep changing our coats. Each role is like a coat. So we have to play all the roles perfectly. So if someone comes to a teacher, they have to come as a student, only student. Similarly for a teacher, for a Guru, everybody is same, whether they are rich, poor or stupid or very intelligent, everyone is same.

77. In Shiva Purana it says anyone who worships Shiva is freed from all sins. Does this mean that corruption begins at the top?

Sri Sri: No, no. Corruption is doing what is not right, that is corruption. That you don't wish to be done to yourself or your kith and kin, someone very close to you. Puja and corruption, you cannot link them. Puja means the feeling that comes out of you with fullness. Like a guest comes to your home, you come to the door and receive them. Someone very dear to you are coming, don't you rush to the train station or airport to receive them? This is coming out of a compulsion or a feeling? What is the feeling there? That cannot be called a corruption. So puja means that which comes out of fullness.

In puranas, many things are written. I'm not an advocate of all the puranas. Don't take me that way, because many of them are a way of expressing. In fact the word purana means new way of expressing.

The Hindi purana and Sanskrit have totally opposite meanings. In Hindi purana means old. In Sanskrit purana means very new, latest, and modern. So it's a different way to express. Don't call that as a corruption. God is not so stupid, that he waits for you to break a coconut

and gives you a boon! He cannot be so stupid. No, no, no.

All the pujas you do are to express your fullness, not to please God. I think this is a very wrong concept in the world. We try to do things to please God. That is wrong understanding. People fast for many days to please God. This is a misunderstanding. You fast to purify your body that is good enough. Don't have to fast to please some God up in the heaven. There is nothing like that.

78. What is the relevance of morality in the real world when Divinity is considered beyond morality?

Sri Sri: Morality is what you don't want someone else to do to you. That is morality. Basic principle of morality is if you don't want your husband to flirt with someone, you should not flirt with someone else's husband! That is it. What you don't wish to be done to you, or your near and dear ones, you should not do to someone else. You don't want someone else to misbehave with your daughter or son then how can you do that with someone else's daughter or son.

Basic principle of morality. You don't want your driver to drink and drive, or someone else coming in front of you to be drunk while driving, then can drive when you are drunk? You don't want anyone else to rob you of your wealth or cheat you, and then you should not cheat someone else.

79. Music and dance is the way to balance energy. Is it wrong to listen to pop, jazz, and rock and roll music?

Sri Sri: No, there is nothing wrong, but if it's too noisy then it's too hard on the nervous system. Jazz, rock music, etc., activates the first chakra, so it takes you out of inertia, no doubt. But it can also be very jarring if you're more subtle, and if you're nervous system is very refined.

Just like how a super-computer needs an air-conditioned controlled proper atmosphere, same is with our nervous system. It cannot handle anything too rajasik or too jarring.

You can just try listening to some very loud music in a rock concert, just stand there for some time, you may enjoy it for five to ten minutes, but afterwards you want to run away from there and when you come back home, your whole body may shake. I've never been to any rock concert; still we rock wherever we are.

Don't see too much meaning in every little thing. Then you are not living life, you are simply stuck in concepts & ideas".

80. Creativity flows from the second chakra. Is there a connection between 2nd and 6th chakra?

Sri Sri: Yes. There is connection between all the chakras. You are the connection.

81. When life feels like an exam, how can one celebrate it?

Sri Sri: Who said life is an exam? Who is the examiner? Come on! Life is a learning process. Not the exam. Got it? Every moment you learn something. Don't think that someone sitting up in the heaven is giving you marks. Who is the student? If you do something good, you learn something; there is no pass or fail here.

82. If santana dharma is the eternal truth, then why did it not spread all over the world?

Sri Sri: If you see the constitution of any country, they all profess what Rig Veda has said. Equality, equanimity. Our Constitution ends with the last verse of Rig Veda. You will find similarity in every country. Remember one thing; there is something in you that are eternal. That does not die. Which is the same? Look at your own life. Your body, emotions, thoughts have changed. But something in you who recognize everything is changing that is what you need to hold on to.

The world is a bouquet of different religions. You need to pick up the good things and leave the not so good things out. In Nepal, many temples they stopped the sacrifice of animals. It is no where in the scriptures to sacrifice animals. Buddha said all that is there in the Upanishads. He came to bring reform. Similarly, Jesus came to bring reform. 60-70 years after that, a religion was formed.

83. Is it more important to perfect my chanting or devotion?

Sri Sri: Both. Devotion is the ultimate but that does not excuse you from not perfecting your chant or action. When guests come, you do everything for them such as making food. When they leave, we fold our hands and say if there are any problems, please excuse me. The guest will not say that you did not give me the proper soap, I will not forgive me. The guests say that you have taken such good care of me.

You see what do you want from guests who come to your house? You want that the guests should leave all formality and be with you like a family member.

If a guest sits and thinks I want tea and I have to ask for it, then you will feel loaded. All the son-in-laws note that when you go to your in-laws place, you mingle with them. See, how you behave when you go to someone's place.

Both types of guests are insensitive: those who come for a few days and stay for a month and those who want to stay for a few days but go away in a few hours making some excuse. Wherever you go, spread belongingness.

84. Why does the darkness bother us?

Sri Sri: You feel like that till there is light. There is light. You just have to open your eyes. You do not have to wait for light.

85. Yoga Vashishta says something and Veda says something.

Sri Sri: Don't get into all this. What you say? See the truth of your life, and then you will understand what Yoga Vashishta says. When your consciousness expands, you understand scriptures better. Knowledge is structured in the consciousness.

86. Should I fear God?

Sri Sri: No need of fear God. It is like being afraid of your mother and father. God is just love and all love. Even if you make a hundred mistakes, he will accept it and wait for you to move. You should simply know that God is loving.

87. Confusion about fearing parents and God.

Sri Sri: A good parent will never create fear in their own kids. Similarly, if God is creating fear in you, he is not God. If you cannot trust your parents, you cannot trust God. Then, you cannot trust yourself. Then you cannot trust anybody.

88. I feel that I am not prosperous.

Sri Sri: For prosperity, you need the blessings of God and you need to put self-effort. One who puts effort and has patience, then they attain prosperity.

89. I want to do seva for you.

Sri Sri: You smile and make everyone else smile, and then know that you have done seva for me.

90. Is Art of Living a religion?

Sri Sri: Art of Living unites people from all religions. Our slogan is One World Family.

91. If a person has committed many sins and he is undergoing the effect of the sins, then what do to?

Sri Sri: You are at the right place at the right time doing the right thing. Many of them will be cancelled. Don't worry at all about your sins. You have come here. That's it Krishna says even though one has done a lot of sins, the moment one shares this knowledge he becomes quickly a pure person. He says don't worry about your sins; I will take care of it.

92. Is it still good to do seva if it's done in compulsion or doesn't feel like doing it?

Sri Sri: See just do seva. Don't analyze it too much. Where is the time to analyze? Forget about it. Be natural. Do what you can. Others are getting happy with what you do.

93. What to do if you talk to someone and they don't respect you?

Sri Sri: Nothing. Make fun of them.

94. How to handle people who emotionally abuse you?

Sri Sri: Emotional abuse is solely your responsibility. If you don't let anybody emotionally manipulate you, no one can do it. If you don't want to be unhappy, no one can make you unhappy. Take a sankalpa come what may I will be happy.

95. Guruji what to do when life seems meaningless?

Sri Sri: Life seems meaningless when you only think of yourself. When you see what you can do for others or ponder over who am I, you will see a fountain of joy will start flowing in your life.

96. Guruji how can we love everyone unconditionally when this world is full of conditions?

Sri Sri: Don't try to love. Just be natural. You have to live in this world with all kind of people. Accept people as they are and you should remember that People's ideas, emotions everything changes. Enemies became friends and vice versa. Haven't you noticed? This

works on some law of karma. 35 years ago when we took yoga and meditation abroad, they did not respect it. They had prejudices. They used to think only some crazy people will do it. But over a period, it started changing do people's opinions change. Time takes care of it. I used to tell our teachers educate and ignore. You can't say that you go through trouble because of your goodness; it is because of your foolishness.

97. Who is a Yogi and what is the Yogic way of life?

Sri Sri: A Yogi is a child. Becoming a baby again is a Yogi. If you look at a baby, from about 3 months to 3 years he does almost all asanas. You don't need a Yoga teacher if you observe a baby and similarly all animals also do some asanas, some exercise. So then nature teaches you, nature is the best teacher. Everything in nature gives you something. A baby is a Yogi and Yogi is child like.

Yogi means one who is connected with the infinity, connected with everyone. Doesn't feel isolated at all, with anyone. A Yogi is one who is skillful; yogi is one who is flexible. You know some people are very flexible in the body, but in their mind they are very rigid. A rigid person is not very palatable. He cannot communicate with someone; he is not open to ideas. So a Yogi is one who has no rigidity, at the same Yogi is not one who is wishy-washy. He is very straight forward. There is strength, yet there is softness. Childlike innocence yet has a depth in wisdom. Childlike not childish! Child like simplicity and wisdom. This is the best combination.

Yogi is a perfect combination of sensibility and sensitivity. Love and Centeredness. Often people, who fall in love, lose their centeredness and people who are very centered they don't seem to be radiating love. A Yogi is that perfect combination of head and heart. Being centered at the same time being very loving, both. Yogi is one who is connected. Connected to the Self, connected to the universal self, connected to everybody, because everybody is connected.

98. How does one get over attachment?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to get over attachment, tell me? Because it is painful? If it doesn't give you pain, you would never think of getting rid of attachment. An attachment gives pain because there is ignorance in it, possessiveness. Don't try to get out of attachment, but learn to be centered. Just expand your understanding about the world, about life, about how things are. Then you will see you don't have to make an effort to get rid of attachment. It will automatically go away.

Like children are so attached to the cotton candy, sweets. You put out some sweets, kids want to go out and grab and eat everything. But when you grow older, that craving for the sweet or toys, those things has dropped out of you. You didn't have to make an effort to get

detached from that. That detachment is a very natural phenomenon.

As you mature, then the small things just fall away. Otherwise you keep holding on to what someone said against you, or abused you and you become so miserable for months together and you even promise yourself that you will never forget it! Don't forget if you but then who will be the one to suffer? This is foolishness. See that different people have different ways of talking, behaving, and expressing themselves.

Don't believe that somebody does not have love in their heart. Don't think that. Everyone does but somewhere it is hidden, some are not able to express it. If you see from this point of view then all the arguments between in-laws will come to an end!

Someone says something to you, it is ok. They say something wrong because of their own stress, some wound inside them. That's why they behave the way they do. Just because they have a wound in them, why do you want to create a wound inside you? Bring about bigness in your mindset; see things from a larger perspective. With love you can win over anyone.

There is no situation that cannot be overcome by love. So it is very important to do some sadhana, practices, for few minutes in a day, expand our perspective. Then we will be happy and keep others also happy. It is foolish to hold on to small things and be miserable and make others also miserable. For that you don't need to be a scholar and read great scriptures. That is not required. Just meditate a little and listen to some knowledge.

99. What to do about the attachment to the Guru? It causes a lot of pain too!

Sri Sri: Well, if you try to possess the Guru then of course it will be difficult. Guru belongs to everyone, not just to one person! Saint Meera has sung that wherever there is love there will be some pain. But this pain is a different kind. It is a sweet pain. If there is attachment to God, Guru or the whole world, it is the same. There is an improvement in your life that is when you worship the Guru.

People think that when we worship the Guru then the improvement happens. That is not so. Now how will you thank the Guru? How your life has transformed, bring about a transformation in others' lives too. Let ten more people get benefitted by you, do that work and you should respect your parents. No matter how their state of mind is, or how they behave. Whether they share your point of view or not, it doesn't matter. Respect them the way they are. So this pain is longing.

Longing and love are the two sides of the same coin. It happens, and because of this all the creativity comes in our life and other things cause the dryness in our life, the longing brings the juice in our life.

100. Pashupatinath is worshipped in Nepal. What is the meaning of Pashupati?

Sri Sri: 'Pashu' means the one who is bound, programmed. There are eight things that bind you. The one bound by these eight things is 'pashu'. Man is a social animal and this society, this world is bound by these eight 'paash' like anger, attachments etc. Pashupati is the one who is the Lord of this world, which is bound by 'paash'. Everything living and non-living thing is bound, so the Lord of all things living or non-living is Pashupatinath and there you should not sacrifice any animals. He does not like it at all.

It is very wrong to sacrifice animals in the name of God. This is prohibited in the scriptures. Never do it. It is ignorance. In Nepal I have heard they make sacrifices of five animals, but this time there has a lot of work that has been done to stop this and educate to people. Keep working like this and make sure it is completely eliminated. Spread the knowledge in every village and every house. If you do not have the power to give life to an animal, you don't have the right to take its life. Every animal has the right to live.

101. The segregation in society of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra is by birth or by our action?

Sri Sri: By our action. This segregation is across the world. In every place there are groups of intellectuals, chamber of commerce (Vaishyas), military personnel (Kshatriyas) and everywhere there are labour unions (Shudra). So it's by our work, actions not by birth.

102. It is said the Devi defeated Mahishasur by 'Hunkaar'. What is that?

Sri Sri: Yes. You take a deep breath in and make the "Huun" sound and see what happens. All the inertia in you disappears! The inertia in you is only Mahishasur.

103. How can I be a better meditator?

Sri Sri: See there is no better or worse meditator. Just be in the present, be happy and instead of thinking what I can get, see how I can contribute, how I can be useful for the society. Change this one thing. There is a joy in getting. Everyone praises me, respects me, gives me this and that, this thing that is in the mind needs to be gotten rid of. Come out of this and think what can I do for everyone? If this shift happens, then meditation also becomes good and life also becomes sweet.

There is a joy that is infant joy, the joy in getting things. We are born with the joy of getting. But have you seen the grandmothers and grandfathers? Their joy is in sharing. A mother cooks so many dishes when children come home and her joy is in feeding everybody, in giving. This is a mature joy. So somewhere in life we have to grow from the joy of grabbing

and getting to the joy of sharing and giving the motherly joy. That means you have matured.

104. I have an analytical mind and I find it difficult to open up to people in fact it I was hesitating to even ask you this question today! How do I get out of this?

Sri Sri: Now you are already out of it right? You are standing in front of me and asking me your question! Where is the hesitation? If there was hesitation then you still would have been stuck there. Have faith in the innocence of the present moment. Whatever we have been in the past, that we hesitate, we are like this or that, this knowledge comes to us when we are out of that. You were sleeping.

When does this knowledge come to you? The moment you wake up! I am always judging people; this knowledge comes to you when you are come out of judgment. If you are stuck in judgments then you feel that, that is the truth. So the moment you get out of the analytical mind, that's when you realize that 'oh, I was stuck, I was judgmental'. So when you feel that you have gone too much into judgments and analysis, practice a bit of music and meditation.

105. You are always connected to us. But from our side sometimes the connection becomes less, sometimes more. How to fix this?

Sri Sri: It seems like that. Know that it is an illusion! Connection is always there. It only seems like it is less sometimes. Only when you are troubled then you feel that way, right? It is just a matter of time.

106. I don't find the strength to do Puja (worship). Please give me the strength.

Sri Sri: Listen, Puja is in your every breath. It is in remembering. What is the meaning of Puja? That which comes out of fullness. When your heart fills up, that is Puja. Wherever you are, just feeling grateful and that is Puja. Don't think that God is pleased by just offering flowers and coconut etc; and you should definitely not do all this to please God. Know that meditation is the best form of Puja.

107. How to be infinity?

Sri Sri: You are already infinity. Don't try to be infinity.

108. What is the effect of Rudram and why is it that women cannot chant it?

Sri Sri: Women can chant it, no problem. Somewhere in the Middle Ages, men were so dominating and they knew women can become much more powerful if women can chant mantras, so they robbed them of all their rights. There is nothing that women cannot do. Rudram is a very ancient chant and it has such an impact on the atmosphere. So much has been sung about Rudram.

109. Do you feel the longing to meet us as we do to meet you?

Sri Sri: But I keep meeting all of you. I am never apart. Longing itself is God.

110. There is a beautiful story in the Upanishads. A child asks his father what God is. The father takes the son out of their home and asks him, "What was here before the building was here?" He said "space". "Where is the building standing now?" he said "in the space". Then he asked, "When the building is erased, what will remain?" He said that is what is God. God is like the space in which everything is there. You can never go out of God, even if you want to. Can anything go out of space? Impossible!

Srimad Bhagavatam starts with the words, from which the birth, sustenance and dissolution happens, in which awareness dawns, from the ancient times, great men found the music, the songs, the feeling of love. The sun of love shone in the hearts of many poets of the ancient times into that ocean of wisdom, into that ocean of love, into that ocean of abundance and brilliance, may my mind, my intellect blossom.

Usually people say faith means keep aside your intellect, don't ask questions. No, that is not the ancient way that is not the Vedic way. Ask questions, keep your rationale alive. Doubt as much as you can, but the truth withstands all your doubt and your questions. That which takes you beyond that limited horizon of thinking, "Satyam Param Dhimahi", let my intellect be soaked in the transcendental truth.

So Bhagavatam begins with "Satyam Param Dhimahi" and ends also with "Satyam Param Dhimahi". So glorifying intellect at the same time glorifying emotions, enriching them is what it is and if children are exposed to such a vast reservoir of knowledge, there is very little chance that they will become fanatics and take guns and start shooting people and think that if they shoot and rape people and think that they will go to heaven. This stupidity will end in the world.

111. Do I have to be enlightened? Can't I just be?

Sri Sri: Just being is enlightenment. Getting rid of all the worry, tension, extra load, cravings

and aversions that you carry, is what enlightenment is. It is freedom, total freedom, total fulfillment, total satisfaction, and absolute comfort. That is what s enlightenment.

112. Goddess Lakshmi's cohort is an 'Ullu' (Owl). Can wealth be found only with 'ullus'?

Sri Sri: Yes she sometimes comes on an 'ullu' but doesn't keep sitting on it. She actually sits on a lotus and sometimes arrives on an 'ullu'. We understand 'ullu' as a fool; one without intelligence but in many countries 'ullu' is used for a wise person - as wise as an owl. So there are different interpretations.

113. In the Gita it is said when worldly person sleeps, the knowledgeable one is awake and when the knowledgeable person sleeps the worldly person awakens. Do they live in different time zones?

Sri Sri: They live in different dimensions, in different state of mind.

114. Is devotion incomplete without knowledge?

Sri Sri: That is true. Devotion transforms into bliss with knowledge. Else without knowledge, there is a lot of pain in devotion.

115. Evil is increasing in society. Is the law the only answer?

Sri Sri: Only the law is not enough. You have to work with awareness. Till the time the society does not embrace knowledge and meditation, and there is a wave of spirituality, till then the transformation will not happen.

116. If we want a certain impact on our chakras, should we listen to particular music?

Sri Sri: Looks like you have a lot of time on your hands, to see what is happening in your chakras! Get out and do some work. 'Chakron ke chakkaron ko chhodo' (get out of the trap of chakras)! You just keep moving ahead, they will take care of themselves. Everything changes every moment. You can't change it with effort. Surrender and relax!

117. At the end of meditation you say the shloka "sham no astu dvipade sham chatuspade". What does it mean?

Sri Sri: Let good happen to all, to humans or two-legged animals as well as four-legged

animals and birds. Let there be peace for all.

118. Lord Subramanyam's cohort is a peacock. Being a warrior it doesn't seem logical. What does it mean?

Sri Sri: If you want to understand the symbols of the Puranas, you should dig deeper. When you do that, you will find only one essence that, that opposites are complementary. That is the essence. You will see it in the symbols. A snake and a peacock are enemies, but understanding the oneness at their core, is the power of spirituality. Taking opposites together and moving forward is a Divine quality. Shiva's cohort is a bull and Parvati's is a tiger. Bulls and tigers are enemies. Yet Shiva and Parvati co-exist. So you should go into the depth of the symbols and understand its essence that the whole creation is made of one thing and belongs to the One.

119. If God resides in everyone's heart then why is it necessary to spend money and build temples? Is it necessary to visit temples to worship God?

Sri Sri: Not necessary. Temples are not just a place of worship, they are cultural centers. You don't need to dismiss them, but you don't need to go to a temple in order to feel grateful or prayerful in your life. See you can eat food anywhere, but you still have a dining table where you sit and eat you can meditate anywhere but when you sit in a meditation hall, it has its value. You don't need more temples. There are enough temples.

In fact your body is a temple. Keep your body, clean and healthy and sit and meditate. Knowledge is the lamp that you have to light in this temple. But in the same breath I would say, take children to temples. It is good for them. Otherwise if you don't have any symbolism etc then that orientation doesn't come in them. For young people's sake who has not yet understood the high philosophy, these are essential.

120. There are many very scary looking images outside temples. Does God reside in them?

Sri Sri: Yes, yes, God resides in everything. You should look into the rooms of children these days. There are such scary posters put up!

121. There are talks to make Gita the national book. What are your views on it?

Sri Sri: What is the need to make it when it is already an international book. It is not just limited to India, it is a universal book. It talks about Yoga, way of life. It should be an international book not necessarily a national book.

122. How can I come closer to you?

Sri Sri: You should simply know that I am close to you and you are close to me. Everybody is close to me. Keep spreading smiles, keep spreading happiness, and don't hate anybody. Then you are close to me and you do it. Every one of us has all the beautiful qualities. You don't have to borrow the qualities from anywhere. You have it. You simply have to come and relax. Distortions are removed in relaxation and how do you get relaxation? Through inaction and dropping desires. If you have desires in the mind then you can't relax you get relaxation through knowledge and how do you get knowledge? Through dispassion.

123. Could you please talk a little bit on the Gayatri mantra?

Sri Sri: Gayatri mantra is the collective mantra that says "Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat", may the Divinity purify me and inspire my intellect. Because my life is run by my thoughts, my thoughts come in my intellect and let the Divinity inspired by my intellect. Let my intellect be soaked in the purity and Divinity and be able to perceive the Divine way. This is the whole essence of Gayatri mantra. It is one of the best prayers.

Instead of asking God, God give me bread, butter and do this and that it is simply saying, may my mind be soaked in the light, the Divinity and all our thoughts, not just mine, All our thoughts be inspired. Isn't it beautiful? If all our thoughts are inspired to do good in society, what more do you want?

124. You spoke about five types of sleep. Do you also see dreams in your sleep?

Sri Sri: My dream for the world is One World Family. A world free from violence, a world free from stress, a world, which has no corruption and I would like everyone one of you to share my dream of a very spiritual and divine society. Where there is peace, where there is joy, there is love, compassion and where there is service.

125. Who is a volunteer?

Sri Sri: One who comes to help, without being asked to help; one who is self-motivated, inspired, becomes a Volunteer. There is the possibility of the inspirational motivation going down in a volunteer, which could bring frustration. Usually volunteer's come from the space of demand rather than humility – this dilutes the quality.

Another slack that could happen to a volunteer is that they could slip away from commitment, thinking there is no 'boss' – "If I like it, I do it; if I don't like it, I don't!" It is like the steering wheel of a car – if the entire tyre says they do not need steering, and then the car cannot run smoothly. If you want to construct a building, you have to accept the

authority of the structural engineer.

All these can only be overcome by being more grounded in spiritual knowledge. A volunteer devoid of spiritual dimension is utterly weak.

- 1) A volunteer needs to stick to his commitment.
- 2) The integrity in a volunteer comes from spiritual practices.
- 3) The authority needs to be acknowledged.
- 4) The strength of a volunteer comes from the challenges he is ready to willingly face.
- 5) A volunteer moves beyond boundaries as he finds he is capable of doing so many things he never ever thought of doing.
- 6) A true volunteer does not expect appreciation or reward.
- 7) A volunteer has such a joy – that joy, itself, comes as the reward.
- 8) If a volunteer thinks he is obliging somebody, he is thoroughly mistaken. He is 'volunteering' because he derives so much joy out of it.

The joy is immediate – it does not come on the first of every month in the form of a salary! When a volunteer realizes this, he is filled with gratitude. When a volunteer waivers from within, the support system is knowledge and good friends.

126. I have been a teacher for many years. I see in myself and other teachers that we don't always practice the basic course points and it disturbs me to a point that I feel a bit of a fraud when I teach. What to do?

Sri Sri: It is good that you feel the pinch. That is the safety valve. If you are oblivious to your not following the teaching, then there is a problem. The moment you recognize that there are shortcomings in you then you are very safe.

Don't think that you are a fraud. You are a traveller on the path and you are guiding the people who are coming behind you. This will only bring humility in you and you will know that knowledge is precious. No doubt you may not follow it 100% but you cannot deny that your life has changed and you are following it at least 80%. So even if you are not following the course points or the knowledge a 100%, you look into the 80% of the points that you are following. There are people who have not even understood or started their journey. For them you can be a real help.

One more thing, when you teach others, you also learn, so doesn't say that I am a hypocrite. As you are teaching, you are also learning and you are refreshing the knowledge. Instead of sitting and blaming yourself and others, it is better you start teaching. Otherwise you will sit and blame yourself, 'I am weak, I am unable to follow the knowledge, I am bad', and then you go into guilt and self-blame. This is the worst thing that can happen to you on the spiritual path. That is why on this path, you always have a guru or a master.

You leave your weakness to your master and go with the strength that you have and move as much as you can. So don't be hard on yourself, and at the same time, recognize that you don't follow all the knowledge but you have the intention to follow and that is good.

So just move on. Don't get off the path and blame yourself. If you feel that way, just come and sit in an advance course, or a blessing course and it will wash it all off, because this life is a journey and you have to keep moving till you find perfection and slowly and steadily you will definitely get it.

Just turn back and analyze. Suppose you had not followed any of the points in life, where would you have been? It will be utterly scary, that is why know this and walk ahead. Leave your shortcomings to me.

127. "The consciousness is like the ocean. The mind is like a wave. Consciousness and the mind are not different. The mind is just a wave in the consciousness. Mind is made up of thoughts. Thoughts keep coming up in the mind. The brain is like a frequency analyzer. Consciousness consists of the three states of sleeping, waking and dreaming.

There is a fourth state that can be attained through meditation. Where you are neither sleeping nor awake. Our consciousness is amazing! The more you study about it, the more amazed you will be and the more you learn about it, the more you will realize how little you know".

"There are many different sorts of people in this world with different thinking. Some accept some type of people, others accept another. I accept all!"

"We should know how to criticize and we should have the strength to take criticism. The sign of a strong person is that he has the ability to listen and take criticism and not run away from it".

128. If there is an argument between God and a devotee and they both get stuck to their points, who wins?

Sri Sri: A devotee always wins.

129. Please help in reducing the plight (difficulty) of the Dalits.

Sri Sri: Absolutely. We have to educate everyone with regard to Dalits. You know there have been about a thousand Rishis (sages), out of whom a lot of them were from the Dalit caste. The two holy books, Ramayan and Mahabharata, are both written by Dalits and the Dalits are the basis of the Hindu religion. Most of the books written were all written by them. Even Lord Shiva is said to be a Dalit.

The different castes are on the basis of occupation, not by birth and all are the same. The legs of the society are the labour class. Without them the society will not move forward. The legs are not unworthy. It is because of them that the society progresses. That is why you should never look down upon the labour class, you should give them due respect. When you do puja, then do you first worship the feet or the head? The feet, right?

In India and Nepal we first bow down and touch the feet! So this untouchability should be eradicated at its root. The practice of untouchability I think is mainly in the villages, not in the cities. Whatever is left of this practice in the villages should be completely eradicated.

There are two very important tasks that need to be undertaken. One is untouchability. Will everyone take a Sankalpa (intention) to remove it? Go to the villages and educate people. The second is ending the tradition of animal sacrifice. So many animals are being slaughtered.

Nowhere in the Vedas and scriptures, has there been any sanction given to this practice. We have to remove this sort of a superstition. This is a problem in both India and Nepal. How many will work on this? (Many raise their hands). Go to every home and educate them. Tell them that all of humanity is one. What have we been always saying? Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (one world family). The whole world is one family.

130. Why did Rama ask Sita to go through the Agni Pariksha (test through fire)?

Sri Sri: Listen I am not Rama's lawyer. Instead of this we should think about what we have to do in society. If we sit to find fault, we will find fault in everything. What we have to focus on is how to bring about progress in society and how to bring together the hearts and minds of the people. This is what we have to focus on!

131. If God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, then Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Jesus, who are all of them?

Sri Sri: Yes God is only one. But God's different qualities and attributes are displayed in different forms. Like how a ray of sunlight is only white in colour but when you see it through a prism you see seven different colours. So in this way the different qualities and attributes

are represented in the different names of the Gods. That is why Jesus said that everything is Light, Love and Life. So God is also Light, Love and the Universal Life. Ram and Krishna were historic personalities while Lord Ganesha etc are Gods in the subtle level of existence. So here we have two things. One is the Parmatama, the one God and then the Devatas who are parts of the one Parmatama.

132. When innocents get killed in riots or terrorist attacks, is it because of their past karmas? How do we explain this?

Sri Sri: What is the need to explain and understand? Do what you can. An eye for eye, tooth for tooth will not do. What has happened has happened, it is the past. What can you do now? You see a victim inside a culprit. The opportunities that you have got to learn, they have not got it. They have either not got education or have got wrong education. Broaden your vision then inside every culprit you will see a victim. That's why they are put in prison, you go to any prison and then you will see how they regret what they did?

There are only two causes for violence. One is wrong indoctrination. Someone tells you, you kill people then you will go to heaven, there you will lot of pleasures. This is something that instigates people to kill. The other one is because they have scars or wounds, broken families, they have such anger and stress inside their hearts that makes them blind. I want to ask you that when you are overcome with anger, don't you regret what you say then? Whatever you do in stress and when tensed, don't you regret it later? So tension, stress and ignorance are the cause of all the violence in the world.

If the Taliban people had a little broader education on human values, they had been taught on compassion, non-violence, love, you think they would have done what they did today? Impossible! Because they lacked education, all that they knew and learnt is one-sided, one angle, so they came to killing others.

133. Gurudev, a few months ago my personal Guru left his physical body. I am not able to bear the grief of his absence and the void because of his departure. How can I console myself and understand that the Guru is not a physical presence, but a Tattva (fundamental all-pervading element or principle in nature). How do I live without him now and keep my mind at peace?

Sri Sri: Just relax and meditate. When you meditate more, you will realize that the Guru is a Tattva, the Guru is a light that is ever glowing and eternal. The Guru is not the (physical) body. The Guru is the Divine light that resides within the body; the Guru is love. Whatever you have received from your Guru, you must share it with others. In life, each one of us becomes a Guru for someone or the other. What does being a Guru mean? A Guru desires nothing from you except your well-being and progress on the path. That is the Guru Tattva. You will surely have to play the role of a Guru in someone's life.

134. As you listen to knowledge, the mind first says, 'O, yes'! And then slowly the mind expands and becomes silent. Then you say 'It is'!

The job of the intellect is to make you say 'yes'. Once the intellect is at rest and agrees with the knowledge, then an expanded awareness dawns on you and you come to realize your true existence, that you are nothing but consciousness.

Then from that state, we expand further to realize that the Self-alone is everywhere. You feel that the Self-alone is all that there is.

So you move from a state of individualized consciousness, i.e., 'I am', to the expanded state of realizing that everything just is.

This is the flow of how our awareness expands with knowledge.

135. Be Grateful

Be Grateful in life – miracles are the end products of gratefulness. When you wake up in the morning be thankful to all. Feel grateful for our very existence, our very body, and all that we have, and all the love we have received and this gratefulness will bring a flood of prosperity, joy and happiness. That will bring a total change in your attitude towards life.

Deep inside somewhere, you feel a fine vibration that touches. That is grace and whenever grace flows, you will find gratitude.

Anything that comes to you not just by your effort and not because you qualify, you can consider it a gift; as grace and grace grows by gratitude. When you demand there is no grace, but when you are grateful it comes in abundance. When there is gratitude, complaints vanish. Discontent is the lower journey; gratitude is the plateau, the middle. Rising above this is grace.

Grace amplifies the effect of good Karma & reduces the effect of bad Karma. Grace manifests inside as prayerfulness, longing. Outwardly grace flows to you as blessings. Grace is not earned through actions. It is a gift from the Divine. Years of different practices cannot bring you the joy that a moment of grace can bestow on you.

Grace flows from gratefulness. Gratefulness is the glow of one's life. A grateful person purifies his entire environment. In his presence all his family, friends, and the people around him are uplifted. Someone in anguish suddenly finds relief.

Knowing that 'I have all the blessings, I have the grace, the best will happen to me', you should move ahead. Life is worth living if even for a moment you have lived gratefully.

An intense desire can frustrate you or make you prayerful. In prayerfulness, there is gratitude & devotion. Prayer is not asking. It is gratitude; recognition of the huge tidal waves of love that God is pouring on you every moment.

Be grateful for whatever God has offered you today and you will see that He goes on offering plenty. Never a lack, but if you go on seeing the lack, then that continues. Your attention on lack allows lack to continue in life.

You cannot be grateful and feel the lack. The two cannot exist at the same time. When you feel grateful, you feel full. When you feel lack, grumbling begins from some corner. If you feel grateful, gratitude will increase in you and you will be given more. If you keep on grumbling, the negativity in you will increase.

Whatever is, that grows. If you sow a seed, that seed will grow. If the seed itself is lack, then lack is what grows. Today you feel a lack, and tomorrow you will feel some other lack, and then in a year, even if all these things are provided, still you will feel some lack. Observe carefully and see what you have been given. Then you become grateful.

In gratefulness, everything that supports life grows. When people grumble all through life, their minds don't focus properly. Naturally, they tend to lose out. Even on the material plane, when consciousness is flooded with lack, lack grows. But if you feel you have plenty, plentifulness grows.

Jesus said, "For those who have not, what little they have will be taken from them and to those who have, more will be given and more and more". This is the law of the nature. For those who do not have this knowledge, there is no way to get out of their grumbling. It becomes a habit.

If you are grateful, gratitude will increase in you and you will be given more. When we are grateful for whatever God has given us, then we never lack anything and the grace continues forever.

It is not necessary for you to touch my feet, or ask me to put my hand on your head. You know, you can sit anywhere and ask for blessings in your mind, and you will receive blessing.

Just by being in the thoughts of the Divine one receives blessings. This is how it happens. So whenever you feel grateful, know that blessings have definitely come along with it. Grace and blessings come automatically. Knowing that 'I have all the blessings, I have the grace, the best will happen to me', you should move ahead.

136. What does Shiva mean?

Sri Sri: "Shiva means that which is peaceful, that which is beautiful, that is all pervading. Shiva is like the sky. Shiva has no body. Shiva has never come on the planet as a person like Krishna, Rama. Shiva was not a personified person. It is energy; the universal energy is called Shiva. 'Lasha' means enthusiasm. 'Kailasha' means only enthusiasm, that place which has only enthusiasm is called Kailasha. In that state of meditation, when you are inside you, in that state of mind when only happiness is there, that state of mind is called Shiva.

The space in the air, fire, water, earth, in all five elements is Shiva, is the prana, mind. They are all forms of Shiva. Shiva doesn't does not have any form, but He is exists in all the forms and the trishul signifies going beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. It is a sign of the fourth state. We just break one coconut in the temple to satisfy God. How many of you don't know why we break coconut in the temples? Our life should be like a coconut. You should be strong like the outer husk of the coconut. Even if it falls from the top, it will not break.

The mind should be like the tender white thing inside and your heart should be like the water inside. See God has made such a beautiful fruit and said this is how you should be! How the water is inside the coconut, in the same way everybody's heart should pour out to everyone. When you meet someone, you give them flowers, because the heart wants to express. When you meet the dear ones you blossom. Something happens in the heart.

Why we break a coconut is because you want to break heart open and express the love inside. Your mind should be white like the inside of the coconut and the heart should be like water. The coconut tree grows where you get salt water. It takes the salty water and turns into sweet water and offers it to everyone. In the same way my life should also be sweet to everyone. God doesn't become happy because we break a coconut. It is for us to understand. In the same way when we burn camphor, there is nothing that is left behind. In the same way, we also want our life to melt and be offered to others, to God".

"When we get more than the effort which we have put in, the ego will not come in. You should feel grateful that you got more than the effort that you put in. So don't look at other people, just look at yourself, how grateful you. If the people who do bad deeds are progressing, it is only to fall down. They are going up to fall down that much! So don't worry if for some time bad people progress. Whoever rises up fast through bad deeds will fall all the way from the top. That's the law. If our mind is good, our heart is pure, everything will be good. Sometimes some challenges will be there, you just keep the faith that truth will prevail and only good things will happen for you".

"According to law of thermodynamics, matter and energy cannot be destroyed. When the body goes back to the earth, the mind, which is energy, where does it go? It stays. How does it stay? With the impressions that it has and it goes and stays and when it finds suitable situation, it comes back. So even by the law of thermodynamics, energy cannot be

destroyed.

Suicide is a very wrong thing to do, if you find someone who wants to commit suicide, you tell them to come here and we will find a better way for you. Our life is so precious! So many people are trying to commit suicide. My call to them is you come here, I will tell you the right place to commit suicide! Don't hang yourself on the ceiling fan. Suicide is like saying; I'm feeling very cold and then removing all your jackets! That is the most stupid thing one can do. Dedicate your life to cause where people are suffering much more than you.

When people don't have a mission, they don't know how to raise the prana level in them, they commit suicide. It's a big issue around the world. When the prana level is normal, you feel normal. When it is high, you feel enthusiastic. When it is even higher, you feel very creative and a lot of energy. When the prana level dips down, first thing that comes is depression. It goes further down, you feel depressed, and then you feel dejected, you feel nobody loves me, and then you want to commit suicide. So the only way to tackle this increases the prana level. Do pranayama, it will all go away".

"There are 5 types of dreams. The first is, all your desires and fears come to you in your dreams. Second type is whatever you have experienced in the past will come to you in your dream. The third thing is intuitive dream, whatever is going to happen tomorrow or ten years later, you may dream today. The fourth type of dream has nothing to do with you; it has to do with the place that you are sleeping in. The fifth type of dream is what you get 95% of the time; it is a mixture of everything. It has no meaning so it is best to not interpret the dreams.

When you wake up from the dream, just drink a glass of water and move on! But wake up and see in life, all that has happened till this moment, is it not like a dream? Some good events, some pleasant, some unpleasant events. All that is like a dream, when you wake up and see. This could be a dream! Could this be a dream? Just project your mind to the future, one year, two years, pleasant unpleasant events, and the whole day will pass on, the whole life will pass on. One day you will go and everything will be finished! One day you will breathe out and you won't take breath in again.

When you came to the planet, the first thing you did was take a deep breath in and you started crying and the last thing you will do is breathe out and make others cry. If others don't cry because you took the last breath, then you have not lived a good life. Isn't it? So see the whole phenomenon as a dream. The future as a dream, the present as a dream, suddenly something happens in your consciousness. You wake up to another dimension. A dimension from which all the prophets, all the saints, Sufis, they all spoke wisdom. That wisdom is here inside us. All you need to realize is this is all a dream and waking up to another dimension of existence. People call it detachment, oh u have to be detached. These are all big big words that scare us. I don't want you to be detached. I just want you to wake up and see that all this is a dream. That is good enough.

Another level of consciousness wakes up inside. That is meditation. That is 'Sat-chit-anand'. That is truth, consciousness and bliss. There is nobody who is not me is the mantra of knowledge. There is nobody who does not belong to me is the mantra of love. Our body is like the wick of a candle; our mind is the glow around it. So at a deeper level you are connected to everybody, every single individual. This is knowledge. I am the space; this is the essence of Gita. Whatever is inside me is inside everybody else it doesn't require skill.

Everybody has different skills and knowledge, but everyone has the same life force in them, the same light in them. Recognizing that is love and knowing that everyone belongs to you is the mantra of love. There are thousands of cells in your body; like that everyone is part of you and this is love. Now you can ask, the person is not right, how can he be mine. Wicked people are sick. If someone in your family is sick, will you be angry at them? The person who is sick will only go towards violence. His heart is filled with hatred, he is hurt. When one is full of hurt, he can only hurt others".

"Move from the object to the seer, that is Yoga. Bringing your mind from the object to the seer, that is Yoga. How do you do that? First observe your body, then your breath, then your mind, then the thoughts and emotions and if you go beyond emotions there is light. You cannot see it; you just have to experience it. We had a good 30 minutes meditation today, how many people lost their aches and pains? How many had their wished fulfilled? The mind has such power. God has given this power to us; we need to use this properly. Our intentions are very strong. We have to use this in a positive way".

137. False Securities

False Security does not allow your faith to grow. When you have dropped your securities, then your faith grows. When you buffer your life with securities, you keep the faith away. It is the faith that brings perfection in you. Faith is the greatest security.

If you have all the material securities and not have faith, you will still reel in fear. You have to let go of all possessions in the mind. False security is keeping things where they don't belong. It is an illusion of security because of having a job, a house, and friends. Keep the house where it belongs, not in the mind. Keep the money in the bank or in the pocket, not in the mind. Keep friends and family where they belong, not in the mind.

The Divine is your only security. Faith is realizing that you always get what you need. Faith is giving the Divine a chance to act. Your body belongs to the world. Your spirit belongs to the Divine.

138. Real Glory - Dispassion

It is often believed that glory and dispassion are contradictory and cannot co-exist. Glory and luxury without dispassion is a nauseating pomp and show. Such glory does not bring fulfillment for anyone. It is shallow. Alternately, the dispassion that is afraid of glory is weak. True dispassion is oblivious to glory.

The glory that comes with dispassion is something that is true, that is permanent and authentic. When someone runs after glory they are shallow. Like movie stars, politicians and religious leaders who try to hold on to their status, to their glory, they are certain to lose. If you run after glory all you get is misery. When you are dispassionate, glory comes to you. If you are afraid of glory, that means you are not well founded in dispassion.

In India, the Sadhus run away from glory. They think they will lose their dispassion and get trapped in the web of the world, the circus. The dispassion is so blissful; they get attached to the dispassion.

They are afraid of losing the dispassion, the centeredness and bliss that comes along with it. This is weak dispassion. Dispassion is a state of being and glory is the happening around it. True dispassion can never be lost or overshadowed by glory. True dispassion is glorious! Real glory is true dispassion!

139. What should I do when someone insults me in a group or in public? Is it correct to complain about that?

Sri Sri: See, when someone insults you, what can you do? You cannot control everyone's mouth. In such a situation, you have only two choices:

1. You also behave in the same way and insult them. But that will not improve the situation in any way
2. You simply smile at their ignorance. Just tell them that every person has the right to their ignorance and to display it as well, and then be quiet.

See, even if someone insults you, it does not stay forever. For a few moments someone says something unpleasant to you and it reaches your ears, but it is all temporary, just like bubbles in water. These unpleasant things come and go.

Who in the world has the time to stop and brood over these petty situations, or to keep thinking about someone else? So when such things happen, do not worry and get disturbed by them.

140. "Is compassion essential for a saint to have? If you have a wound on your hand will you show compassion or sympathy for your own hand? No. In the same way some saints may not show compassion but they are steadfast in knowledge that there is no two.

Compassion is color of love. It is not necessary that the same color is displayed by all. Love is always there, but compassion is only one of the expressions of love and it not necessary that it is expressed by all, because, if a person is established in the knowledge of non-duality then he doesn't have compassion in them.

See there are two types of people who do not show any compassion. One who is has a cruel heart, filled with stress and hatred, tamasic in nature and the other is one who is established in the knowledge of non-duality. One who doesn't see anyone as separate from himself; He too does not have any compassion. Compassion means there has to be two; one can never show compassion or sympathy on oneself. For compassion or sympathy you need two. Of course, that doesn't mean you it an excuse for your insensitivity!

You know you will find a thousand opportunities to doubt if a person is good or not. There will be a thousand doubts that will rise within you that will cause you to think of someone as wrong. But rising above these thousand doubts is true connection, that which is beyond the intellect. Doubt always comes up in the intellect. But when the connection is established at the level of the soul then even if the intellect brings forth a thousand reasons to show you that this person is wrong, the soul does not listen to it. Then it stays.

Confidence in someone is a matter of the soul, the Self. That's why you say self-confidence. That means confidence in one's own self. But confidence itself comes from the Self. Doubt is from the intellect. So when the confidence, the faith is established, then the intellect brings forth many doubts to test the faith. Sometimes you feel doubtful, you will feel low but somewhere the confidence will stand its ground, which will tell you what the truth is, what is right.

There was a saint who did not have any compassion. He was irritated by the word compassion! He believed that everyone was suffering because of their own karmas. That was his thought process. No matter what goes on, on the outside, inside you always know what is right. For example, sometimes no matter what a person says or does, somewhere inside you know that he is right or wrong. That ability to differentiate between right and wrong is there inside us, which is beyond behaviour, thought process, beyond a person. When we are connected to a person beyond their behaviour, their thinking, that is faith and is that faith comes into your life then rest everything else falls into place!"

141. How can we always be established in non-duality?

Sri Sri: No don't always try to be established in non-duality. Your outer behaviour has to be on the basis of duality. You cannot move forward without that. Use duality in your outer

behaviour and be established in non-duality in meditation, in rest.

Whenever your mind is agitated, rest in non-duality. Non-duality in meditation, pooja but duality in behaviour. Else it will be problematic, if you start thinking your wallet and someone else's wallet is the same! You will also be in trouble and the other too! So keep duality in your day-to-day life but you need non-duality when you meditate, in knowledge. You cannot progress in knowledge without non-duality. You cannot reach the ultimate love, the ultimate devotion without non-duality.

142. Eight levels of existence and then some!

"Lord Krishna has said, "Mana-eva manushyanam karanam bandha-mokshayoh. Bandhaya vishayasango muktyai-nirvishayam manah".

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says that one's mind is one's own worst enemy, and also one's own best friend. The mind alone is the sole cause of bondage and also the source of one's liberation (from worldly delusion and attachment).

There are seven levels of existence. I will add an eighth one to the list – the environment. The eight levels of existence are: the environment, the (physical) body, the breath, the mind, the intellect, the memory, the ego and the self.

Is your mind here at this moment? Or is your mind wandering somewhere else? Your mind must be present here, right now. The faculty that helps you hear, see, taste, smell and touch is the mind. Then comes the Intellect.

The intellect is the faculty that helps us decide whether something we hear is nice or not; whether something we taste is to our liking or not.

Then comes the memory or Chitta. It is that faculty that helps us remember all that we perceive and understand through our senses and the intellect. Events leave their impressions on the Chitta.

Then comes the ego, and finally the soul or the self. If we gain a little deeper understanding of these seven faculties of our existence, then it can bring about a great transformation in our lives and this is what The Art of Living is all about. When you gain this knowledge about the levels of your existence, then you start blossoming with joy from within.

Just ask yourself this question, 'whatever you do in life, what is the purpose behind that? Why do you do what you do?' It is to be happy, isn't it so?

We do everything to be happy, but are we truly happy? If you ask young children whether they are happy now or not, they will answer, "Once I finish school and go to college, then I

will be happy. Then my parents will not be behind me".

When they join college, they feel that they will be happy once they get a good job. When they get a job, then they feel that they will be happy once they get married and settle down with a partner. Then after some time, they feel that once they have children then they will be happy. But then once they have their children, they worry about their education, and feel that once their children get admitted to a good school, they will be happy. Then after a few years, they feel that once their children finish their education and settle down, they will be happy. But by that time, their own life begins to come to an end.

We tirelessly run around our entire life in search of happiness, but we never find it. It is like preparing a bed to sleep on, but by the time we finish spreading the bed sheet and the pillows, it is morning already. We end up getting no time to sleep and rest. This is what we should not allow to happen.

Our life is very important. In this very life we can attain that through which everything in this creation has manifested and is in motion. It is important that we recognize that one supreme power which is making everything happen in this world. Once you realize that, then no one will be able to wipe away your smile, nor shake that deep love within you.

Two things are most important for life to run smoothly. The first is Love. Would you be able to live if everyone around you told you that they do not love you? No! We want that everyone should love us. But then you must also ask yourself that how many people have you loved unconditionally?

You know, at the time of death, only two questions will be before us: how much love have we shared, and how much knowledge have we gained in our lifetime?

We often do the exact opposite of this. We are more inclined to get love from others (rather than giving), and we stay stuck in giving knowledge to others rather than receiving.

True spirituality is that knowledge which maintains an unshakable happiness in you, and which helps bring happiness to others around us by your very presence.

Spirituality is that which takes you deeper within yourself and also enables you to bring peace and happiness to others around us. Life is so dry and juice-less without spirituality. A life that is dry is the surest way of sinking into negativity. We tend to get angry quickly and more often, we get stuck in cravings and aversions, we feel disturbed. The root cause of all this is having a dry and juice-less life.

So how can we make our life juicier? There are two ways:

1. Deep faith
2. Deep rest

Have this unshakable faith that the creator of the world loves you very dearly. Believe that 'God is in me, and I in Him'. This single faith alone can take you to great heights.

God's love is 1000 times more intense than the love of your parents towards you. You may call that supreme power by any name that you like, you can call it Mother Divine, Lord Shiva, or God, etc. It does not matter. God loves you very dearly all the same. So this faith you must have. Just do this once and see how your life changes. Then whatever you wish for will start to happen. Have this faith in your heart and just relax and repose within yourself.

So first you must have faith in God. Then have faith in the fact that there are many good and noble people in the society. There are some people who have gone astray, but the number of good people is far greater even today. Have faith in the goodness of the people around you.

Then you must have faith in yourself. It is very important to have faith in yourself and along with that faith, you must also rest – and this rest can only come through meditation. So we all must meditate and learn a few pranayamas. Then you will have no reason whatsoever to be sad or dejected in life”.

143. What is the significance of a Christmas tree?

Sri Sri: Be like the Christmas tree; evergreen, shining, full of lights and full of gifts. So everyone here is a Christmas tree. A Christmas tree only gives; it doesn't take anything for itself. It just gives. So go with that thought, I'm a Christmas tree!

Come summer or winter or fall, it never falls, never springs. All through the year it's green and in winter it gives presents.

I want to see everyone smiling and happy. Just create waves of happiness, everything else is irrelevant. In the world things happen, some pleasant, some unpleasant. Some things happen the way you want it, some things don't happen the way you want. Bundle it all and put it aside. Nothing can really take away your happiness.

When you have had a good meditation, and when the prana is high, what do you feel? Nothing matters! Right? Nothing really matters! This is what we need to know. When you know nothing matters, you are happy. Happiness is our very nature. What overshadows this happiness is, 'I want this', or, 'I want that'. 'I want something', this is what puts away happiness. When you say nothing what so ever matters, immediately freedom is there. Just keep this in mind, that's all. Nothing, what so ever will matter!

In the world there is always some imperfection, some pleasant things, and some unpleasant things. Some things happen the way you want it to happen, some things the way you don't want it to happen; it's part of creation. When nothing matters to you then things happen the

way you want. 90% things would automatically happen, or whatever is happening that is what you would want.

In this whole drama, in this whole universe of multitude, of diversity, this complex game of life and society is inevitable. Things come and fleet away, and everything that comes and goes has a purpose. A thorn and a soft rose petal, they both have their purpose. It boils down to our first point, opposite values are complimentary.

Don't worry about anything. No need to be scared or worried about anything. Though Jesus says in his last moment, 'God have you forsaken me?' He immediately realized that no, he has not forsaken me. But that pain sometimes brings that question, 'Oh God, have you forsaken me?'

So what is the essence? Nothing matters! You'll say, 'I don't worry about the world but I worry about my connection to the path, to the knowledge, to God and all that'. I tell you, it can never go! That will not go. You don't worry about it at all. Do you get it? Your connection with the Divine can never go.

144. Guruji, in Mahabharata Arjuna takes his bow against his own Guru Dronacharya. Is it correct to do that? What is your opinion about it?

Sri Sri: Even if anyone does something wrong can be a Guru, because he is teaching you to do the right. In this case Dronacharya was a Guru but not a Satguru. Only Sri Krishna is the Satguru. He is the only Jagatguru. The one, who only teaches an art or a skill, cannot be a Guru.

For example, if your headmaster who taught you in your school, encroaches on your property, will you say, its ok he was my guru. Won't you by all means see to it that you get your property back? He was only teaching you some art, or some theories. He did not teach you the Atma-gnayan (Self knowledge).

You learnt driving from someone right? Then the one, who taught you driving, also becomes your Guru. Tomorrow you find him involved with some underworld connection, would you say, Oh, no its ok he is my Guru!

There is a vast difference between the west and the east. In the west we have linear thinking, whereas in the east every thing is round. Here in South India, we do not go a full circle around a Shiva temple. We go semi circle and come back (laughter)! That's why in Sanskrit they say, "Gyanam ecchya Eshwaraha, Moksham Ecchya Janardana". Which means you can get the knowledge by the grace of the Shiva, but you can get Moksha (liberation) only by the grace of Krishna!

Also I tell you the Guru becomes the happiest to see the disciple combating him at the

battlefield and he would always bless the disciple to win over him. Similarly when Dronacharya saw Arjuna at the battlefield, he was happy. He was happy because he thought that finally his teachings are showing up! He feels successful as a teacher.

In the case of Dronacharya, he was tied up to his dharma. He was the appointed teacher of the princes of Hastinapura. He has eaten their food for so many long years. That's why he was tied up with Duryodhana. Because they paid him for so many years! But seeing Arjuna he was happy. Someone worth was created by him he thought. Arjuna is in the right place he thought.

But Arjuna was sad to be against Dronacharya, Bhishma and all the others at the battlefield. He was entangled. A Satguru is both your friend and your well wisher. While Drona was only a teacher to Arjuna, who taught him an art, while Krishna was his Satguru, his Jagatguru. Then to destroy the entanglement in Arjuna, Krishna had to teach the Bhagwat Gita. Thanks to the entanglement of Arjuna also (laughter)! Because of the entanglement in Arjuna's mind, the entire Bhagwat Gita happened.

Krishna says, Oh Arjuna! All the people you see are already dead! The history is already created! You just lift your bow and shoot. You will have done no sin since I am telling you to do it. Krishna was like a dear friend to Arjuna. In the Bhagavatam, except for Vidura and Udhava, nobody even thought he was enlightened; they all thought that he was just very smart. The Pandavas and the gopis knew who Krishna was and how complete He was from all angles. But many of them, including Arjuna, did not see him that way. Krishna, however, shows him that He is infinite.

Even then Arjuna was not ready to do what Krishna said! Then Krishna had to show Him is Vishal Swaroopa! He showed Arjuna that He is the beginning and the end of everything. He is the star, the sky the entire creation is in Him!

Krishna tells Arjuna, "I will give you a special eye of knowledge, which I haven't given anybody in ages. I am giving it to you now because it is time". With that, He gives him a vision. For that one moment the universe appears as a manifestation of Krishna to Arjuna. This is called Vishva Roopa Darshana – the vision of the universal.

Thereafter, Krishna tells Arjuna about the yagyas, principles and laws of the universe. Then He talks about sanyasa and how to be centered. Arjuna tells Krishna that what he says is not easy to follow. Krishna says, "I agree, it is difficult but not impossible. With practice, dispassion and by getting to the centre again, you will succeed".

Krishna tried everything. Finally, it was the display of the universal vision that worked on Arjuna. When Arjuna says, "I give up," Krishna says, "Think and do whatever is best for you after pondering over what I have said". And then Arjuna says his mind is now clear. Krishna had to speak through 18 chapters to get him to that point. He could have done it at the very first chapter. But the way this knowledge flows is really beautiful.

Arjuna sees all of creation, everything – the mountains and the rivers, the past, the present and the future – dissolving in Krishna. For an instant, the whole of life, the universe, all memories play out like a movie and it frightens Arjuna. Arjuna was shocked. He was taken aback and then Arjuna pleads, "Oh! Please show me your simple, natural and friendly face. I like your simple smile and I want to see my friend. I don't want to see anything beyond. It is too much for me."

Then Krishna says, I am the only one in your life. There is no one else in your life. Dissolve in me. There is no you and me anyways. There is no difference in you and me. If you just do as I say, you will not be responsible for any sin. I am only one!

Then he says, "But Krishna, I thought you are my friend. I ate with you, I sang with you, I played with you, I slept with you. I thought you are like me!"

Arjuna got frightened. He said, "You better come back to your original form. I am not able to relate to you". He showed both the soft and the strict side of himself to Arjuna. That's how we say opposite values are complementary.

Truth is contradictory; if it is not contradictory, then it is not truth!

The Bhagavad Gita is full of contradictions. You can understand it only if you see it in totality.

At one point, Krishna tells Arjuna that action is the most important thing and without action one will be nowhere. But after that, He tells him that action is all right but knowledge is better! Then Krishna says, "you must become a yogi and drop everything around you".

Krishna tells Arjuna in Chapter Six that since he is confused, there is no use talking. He asks him to meditate. Finally, He says, "He is the greatest amongst yogis who keeps Me in his heart whether he meditates or not. He is the real yogi, because I am with him in whatever he is doing".

At one juncture, Krishna says, "Arjuna, there is nobody dear to me, nobody whom I love". And then gives a whole list of qualifications for those He really loves!

In another instance, Krishna tells Arjuna to act without looking for the fruit of action. Later, He asks Arjuna to act properly, according to natural law. Then He tells him that he ought to fight if he wants to win the war. So, at this point He is bringing Arjuna's attention to the fruit of action, but then He also tells him not to worry about the fruit of action.

Everything may appear to be all contradictory from all angles. But that is reality!

145. Now is the Time to Act

Behind every action, there is always a motivation to get a specific result. When you do every action with an eye on the end result or on any specific goal, the expectation of the result affects the process of your action.

Put it another way, the means of achieving the end often becomes bigger than the end itself, but when you do some action as an expression of joy and are not bothered about the result, you will not be lost in the means.

When you do some actions expecting joy out of them, it makes the action inferior. For example, you want to spread happiness, but if you are keen on finding out whether the other person has become happy or not, you get entangled in their vicious circle and you lose your happiness in the process.

Or suppose, you want to take up a project, but you start it by worrying whether it will happen or not, then your whole enthusiasm for the project gets dampened.

The concern about the outcome of your action is what pulls you down and dampens your enthusiasm. So when you are aware of your potential, just jump into the action you want to do without bothering about the result.

When you are in doubt, any activity you do will bring more doubts. When you have a choice, the grass on the other side will look greener and this will prevent you from enjoying what you have in your hand. It will not allow you to focus on what is right now. So when you are bothered by a choice, just relax and understand that choices bring conflict and there is freedom in 'choicelessness'.

So how to be centered when there is a doubt or conflict? In Narada Bhakti Sutras, Narada says, 'Karmanyapi Sanyasyati' Take a break, not just from activity, but also from the fruit of the activity. You can take a break from the fruit of the action when you let go of the result and become totally centered in the action itself. It will bring deep rest from doubts and conflicts in the mind.

One, who is not concerned about the outcome, is centered in the action itself and reposes in the self, goes beyond the dualities, beyond conflicts.

This doesn't mean that you should stop acting. Though one who is wise, who has attained knowledge, and experienced divine love, is beyond all actions yet he continues to engage himself in action.

You can transcend only what you have gone through. You can let go only what you have. So to let go of the fruit of the action, you need to have the fruit and to have the fruit, you need to act! This is so beautiful.

Shri Krishna used the fruit of the action to motivate Arjuna to fight. He told Arjuna that if you die in the battle, you will attain heaven and if you win, you will rule the world. Jesus also did the same.

When you are bogged down with laziness, you need motivation to do something and the expected fruit of action acts as the motivating factor. But once you start acting, let go off the expected result. Just focus on the work on hand. So be active. Keep doing your work, and drop the fruit of action. All the fruit of action is there as the motivation for you to start acting. This is the way of the wise!

146. Some dreams don't come true in spite of putting efforts. What should one do?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: You keep putting your effort. Perhaps you don't succeed the first time or second time. Yet if your intention is strong, it will happen.

147. How to be compassionate towards those who do not behave properly with us. I find being compassionate more difficult than getting angry or irritated.

Sri Sri: If you broaden your vision you will see this from a different angle. You will feel sorry for the person with whom you are getting angry. Their behavior is rude because somewhere in their psyche there is roughness, discomfort, and uneasiness. They have not received as much knowledge or love as much as you have. They don't have that much wisdom, and that is why they are behaving in this way. When this understanding comes to you, then compassion also will come.

148. This question has bothered me for a long time. Billions of people have been born and billions have died. I am born and I will die. Then what is the purpose of life? Why are we here if all are going to die?

Sri Sri: Why not? So many people were born and died, so many are living and they will die and so many will be born in future and they will also die. You are thinking from a business mind – what am I going to get? - What is the aim? What is the purpose? There should be something coming out of everything. So when you think from a business mind, this whole exercise appears totally uneconomical and futile.

Biggest disadvantage is that it seems God hasn't studied economics (Laughter); else Einstein would be given another 100 years so that he could perform some more experiments, discoveries. So many leaves are coming up every spring and then they fall. Such an economical disaster! People are dying and new babies are born, go to school, college – job – get married – have children – and then die again. It appears to be completely bizarre. But that's how it is.

149. Any guidelines for a spiritual seeker?

Sri Sri: 1. Don't go for spiritual shopping. A little bit here, take some here, take something there. You will get confused and it will be a mess doesn't do that.

2. Have patience. You are on a path, have patience. Patience will definitely pay off.

3. Be sincere there will be many a temptations on the path. Just keep your focus and move ahead.

150. Sometimes blessings don't seem to yield the desired results in time. What do I do?

Sri Sri: It will take its own time. Everything works according to some law. Mangoes will only come in the mango season. Though you have a mango tree you cannot expect in the month of December that the tree will give mangoes! There is a tree but for the fruit till that April, May, season time. In the same way, there is a right time for a blessing and the Nature or Brahman knows when to give you what and how much. Just wait for it.

151. Finding Joy in Spirituality

The important thing is that while we live, we shall be happy and have fun in all that we do. While man is alive, he usually gets entangled in thinking, 'Oh, what will happen to me? What if there are some difficulties tomorrow? How will I be happy?'

This urges him to acquire wealth for a sense of security. The main aim of life is to be happy and comfortable with what we have, but often the path one takes brings misery instead of happiness. This is utter foolishness.

So what does an intelligent person do? An intelligent person knows for sure that God is with them; God loves them and belongs to them, so they don't need to worry about anything. This feeling of deep faith gives them confidence. This is the secret of confidence. So they are able to do and achieve what they want.

See, if you are in the driving seat then you can turn the car in whichever direction you want, and spirituality gives you that strength to go where you want to. Hasn't this happened for you? How many of you here have experienced that whatever you wish for starts happening? (Many in the audience raise hands in agreement).

This is the magic of being in knowledge, of having tasted the nectar of the spiritual path. What is the use of behaving like a beggar all the time? There is a saying, 'Ram jharoke baith sabka mujra le' (Meaning: Repose in the faith of the Divine and see everything as a passing event). So when the connection with the Divine happens, no matter where you are, you can

achieve and get what you wish for. Whatever blessing you give starts to manifest. Many of you have had this experience. This is the great wealth of spiritual knowledge.

We have such great knowledge with us in this country but many people are not even aware of it. People go to the temple, just break a coconut, give money to the priest to perform Aarti (act of rotating the sacred lamp before the deity) and keep wondering on how to improve their life. They come back home and get stuck again in craving and aversion, criticizing others, belittling others, and getting entangled in feelings of jealousy and greed. They spend their whole life like that.

To improve your life you should find joy in spirituality. Once you find this joy, do not run away from your family responsibilities; stay at home and attend to your family responsibilities also. Balance both so that you're spiritual life as well as your family life improves.

This is such beautiful knowledge and this is what we must practice also.

152. Envy and jealousy has caused so much death in wars, what to do?

Sri Sri: Only spiritual knowledge can encounter it, there is no other way. The destructive mind cannot be in any other manner, not by logic and reasoning. So this type of destruction is part of this creation and it keeps happening. How do you counter that?

Only through wisdom and awareness. We need to create the age of wisdom, and awareness where people value something higher so it can reduce jealousy can be reduced to a great extent. I am not saying it will eliminate completely. But it will definitely decrease. But it will definitely reduce to a great extent, you gain yukti through meditation. Meditation is something much higher than any action.

153. Gurudev is it okay to cry or is it a sign of weakness?

Sri Sri: Yes, it is okay to cry. No, it is not a sign of weakness. Tears come when you are grateful. Tears come when you are in deep love, or deep in despair. It is inbuilt in the human system. Laughing and crying are two important things of human life.

You came into this world crying. If you had not, your parents would have cried and when you leave this world, then also people will cry. If they don't cry, you have not lived a good life. By your departure, if people are happy, you have not lived well.

154. You have talked about hidden meanings behind symbols in Hinduism, which seem to be very illogical. Could you please talk about many crores of devtas?

Sri Sri: Crore, Koti means types. 33 crores mean 33 types of divine impulses. In our body also there are 33 types of divine impulses. In our genes also there are 33 types. A particular type makes the eye, a particular type makes the nose, and like that a particular type makes eardrums, hair, nails. Like this there are 33 rays of divinity.

One light, one God, one Parmatma but there are 33 aspects. Devas are the 33 different aspects of divinity. Here crore is not referred to as a number. Divine has no form but ancient saints have said you can adore him in any form or names. All the thousand names belong to God only. This is very deep science or deep knowledge. It's amazing.

When you go more and more deep into this, then you feel wow. People who have discovered this and written this have simply stupendous knowledge. The universe is not so simple. It's very complex. Modern physics also says that deeper and deeper there are so many different type of particles. So the diverse universe and the divinity, which manages, rules and has made this diverse universe is devta.

The English name David is a Sanskrit word. Dev + vid, dev means divinity, vid means to know. David means one who knows the divinity. Divinity is not somewhere up in the heaven. It is present in the world, universe, everywhere and it has to be realized that when the mind is calm, serene and settled in our heart and when emotion and intellect merge into a serene blend in silence, then you are able to perceive the subtle reality of Universe and that is devta.

155. How to deal with logical mind – it doesn't allow to let go and have complete faith in you?

Sri Sri: Never mind, don't struggle. Let it mature. It is not a bad mind, it is a good mind. Let it go in the doubt. You will see it will drop all by itself.

Logic and devotion is not contradictory. Meditation is the bridge between logic and emotion. From both bhakti and logic you come to meditation. From dhyaan you go to gyaan and then ultimate devotion.

156. What was the intention behind my birth?

Sri Sri: This is a very good question. It means you have woken up. It is a wake-up call. Give yourself a pat on the back, but don't be in a hurry to get an answer. It is like the seed has just sprouted. It needs nurturing. Meditation and your Sadhana is the way to nurture your seed into a tree. I am sure you will find the answer to know who I am.

157. Will it affect my karma to work on the gambling project?

Sri Sri: If it is just a work you do it. If your intention is not to put people in some sort of trouble then your karma is not going to be created. If you are loyal to your work that much detachment you will have.

It is a very delicate issue. It is called apadharma. You have an assignment. Complete it and be detached. But don't take me wrong that Guruji has said so I can do such things like gambling.

When you are just performing your duty you are fine.

158. How to love someone who I do not understand?

Sri Sri: As a baby is born, it looks into its mother's eyes, and starts loving the mother. The baby does not know anything about the mother. It does not know the name of the mother, or the school she went to, what subjects she studied, or how old she is. The baby does not even care, it does not even know.

In the same way, the puppy or the dog in your house does not know you. If the dog knew you, perhaps it would not love you! (Laughter) So, you don't need to know someone to love them.

159. How to open my heart for more love?

Sri Sri: Don't try to open your heart. You cannot do an open-heart surgery on yourself. Leave it to me!

160. How can I get close to you?

Sri Sri: Assume that you are close to me. It is you who thinks you are not close.

161. We got perfect Guru but did you get perfect disciples?

Sri Sri: Guru doesn't think about the disciple. Guru is lost in his own fun! He takes along whoever comes in his way. The river is flowing, whoever wants to dive into it may do so, or just dip his feet may do so. If someone wants to swim in it or take a vessel of water from it is up to them. The ocean just exists. If you want salt, take salt from it, if you want pearls, take pearls from it, if you want fish take fish from it!

162. Does contentment after indulging or without indulging?

Sri Sri: Contentment comes with elevation of consciousness. What you keep seeing and hearing, you will get craving for more of that. If you keep thinking of food the whole day, the more you think, the more you feel like eating. Even though you are not hungry you want to eat because your mind is dwelling on it. Capacity for senses to enjoy is limited, but the hunger in the mind is unlimited.

When there is disproportion between the mind and the body. If mind is not in tune with capacity of body it causes huge imbalance and host of problems come. Bulimia and such diseases are a result of this. So for contentment first is put a brake and then to counter that you give it substitute, that is sadhana. Then there is joy in creativity, committed work.

When there is a deadline to your work, there is a different energy and focus to your work. At that time, nothing else matters. No self-gratification is an issue then. So when there is dedication in life to do some work, when in emergency you have to do something, then automatically your energies are channelized and when energies are channelized, then all the cravings and aversions will be subdued.

A goal or cause in life will help you come out of your hunger for insatiable desires and above all this is love. When you fall in love then nothing else matters. Then we don't see discipline, indiscipline. We don't find anything as a burden. Everything happens effortlessly.

163. If love is not an emotion but your very existence then how come love disappear one day and appear again some other day?

Sri Sri: See, the sun appears to have disappeared but in reality, it is not. It is just hiding or we have turned to another side. That's it!

164. I miss you very much. Do you miss me?

Sri Sri: When I am in your mind it's only me who exists. But when I am not in your mind I miss you very much. I long for you.

Longing is older than love because longing gives birth to love.

It is longing that reaches love and they always go together. There cannot be love without longing, and there cannot be longing without love.

165. How can you long for something that you have not loved and how can you not feel longing, if you love something?

Sri Sri: If you love something, you will naturally long for it!

166. Goal of Education

According to me, the true meaning and the goal of education is to increase prana, i.e., one's awareness. Education is not simply gathering more and more of information. That is something, which even a computer can do.

Education is the art of making a human being a humane person. It is the ability to coexist with each other in harmony, and having a mature and non-violent approach to resolve conflicts between each other and arrive at mutual solutions to problems that benefit everyone.

167. Narayan

Narayan means what? That energy which is present in all the nervous systems, in all of creation. Anything that sparkles in living beings is called Narayan. The word 'nervous system' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Nara', which also means 'human beings'.

Narayan means that which is housed in the beautiful and amazing nervous system. Just imagine a human being without a nervous system, he will not be alive. It is because of your nervous system that you are able to express yourself. That energy which perceives and which expresses in the whole universe is Narayan.

168. Fasting Scientifically

Fasting and prayers are somehow connected. In almost every religion and every tradition of the world they have connected fasting and prayer together.

When you fast you are not pleasing some god out there by your fasting. It simply helps to detox your body. When the body gets detoxified then thoughts become positive. When there are too many toxins in the body, and the pancreas, liver and intestine are all congested then your thoughts are all negative and unclear. So fasting is done to have that cleansing effect on your body, not to please a god.

Fasting also has some rules, but people don't follow even the fasting rule properly. People think fasting means that they can eat certain things and cannot eat certain things. You can eat lots of nuts and fruits but not eat cooked food, or rice, or bread. This is not fasting.

Someday people eat boiled potatoes and sweets and say they are fasting. They are fooling themselves and sometimes, some people who want to fast all day get up before sunrise and stuff themselves with food. Then they fast and as soon as the sun sets, again they stuff themselves. It is a very bad way of fasting.

Fasting has to happen scientifically. Fast with juice and water, some fruits so that the enzymes are generated in the body. The indigested food gets digested. It is very bad eating very late in night on fasting days because your digestive fire is not there to digest that food. So you should not do that.

People fast in an unscientific manner. Fasting should be rational. Almost in every tradition people fast this way – Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus – they all should know the scientific way of fasting.

The Ayurvedic way of fasting is very clearly mentioned. Little bit of fruits, juices, water and lemon and if your endurance is there then fast just on water, one or two days. This is what we need to educate people.

Even during the month of Ramazan, they fast whole day, the pitta rises, and in the evening they eat so much. This is wrong. In the evening when they eat, they should have salads, fruits, and something light; something that gives rest to the system.

Hindus do fasting during navratri, and they eat jalebis! They eat all the sweets, and boiled potatoes – that is starch! This is not the correct way; there should be only fruits and fruit juices.

When you fast you are not pleasing some god out there by your fasting. It simply helps to detox your body. When the body gets detoxified then thoughts become positive. When there are too many toxins in the body, and the pancreas, liver and intestine are all congested then your thoughts are all negative and unclear. So fasting is done to have that cleansing effect on your body, not to please a god.

169. One Divinity

You know, some people may ask, 'Why do Indians worship so many Gods and Goddesses?' This is wrong understanding. It is all one divinity, but to create that personal connection and deep oneness with it, people worship it in their own way, and that is why we have different forms and different names. Even when people are worshipping idols, they are not really worshipping the stone, rather they worship the divinity, just like how we keep pictures of our dear ones with us wherever we go.

We keep pictures of our children with us. They may not be with us but seeing that picture instantly brings that intense connection. The same is with an idol. An idol is kept simply to

make that connection with the divine.

170. Put your efforts and give up

In the field you throw so many seeds. Not all seeds sprout. Some sprout, some don't. When you sow saplings, not every sapling grows. Some do, some don't. In a tree, not all flowers become fruit. Some fall when they are not even ripe. That's why you put your effort and then you give up (here meaning surrender).

Giving up without putting any effort is foolishness and after putting all your effort, not giving up is also foolishness. Put all your effort and give up. Not putting all your effort and giving up is also foolishness.

What makes you free? Putting your effort and giving up makes you free. If you say, 'I give up', without putting effort, it doesn't make you free. You say, 'I give up', but you have not really given up because of that tendency of wanting to do. That will hold you back from being free.

The secret of freedom is, put your effort and give up. Not putting your effort and giving up doesn't free you and, putting all your effort and not giving up will also not free you. Any action should only be done with awareness. An action from an unaware state has no meaning. Then it's not called effort.

171. How to control the anger?

Sri Sri: Do you know why you get angry? It is because you want perfection, or you want certain things to be in a certain way.

When you know that not everything can be that way; let's face it this is life, then suddenly the brain starts relaxing.

By your getting angry, it is not going to help you in any way. It is not going to make the work happen, isn't it? But if you show anger, and it works, that is good, then use it. There is nothing wrong in it.

There is nothing wrong in using anger as a weapon, but if it is cutting your own peace of mind, then you should use wisdom to safeguard yourself.

Wisdom is to give some room for imperfection as well.

In a house, don't you keep a dustbin? Yes, you do. So there is a place for the dustbin as well. In the same way, give some room for imperfection, by which at least your mind will be at

peace.

What is the point of keeping your mind disturbed? There are all types of people in the world.

I have made a policy in The Art of Living, not to send anybody away. Accept people as they are. With this, now I am stuck! Just wonder, how many different types of people come to The Art of Living, and I make room for everybody.

You know, society is made up of 12 people, not just the apostles of Jesus. What are those? Four good, four mediocre and four hopeless. Hopeless people help you maintain the satva guna in you. In front of hopeless people, your mind should be at peace. Mediocre people bring out the skills in you, and good people always help you.

So these 12 kinds of people are always there in the society. We have to accept them as they are and move ahead.

Somebody asked me, 'Gurudev why are corrupt people coming to your ashram, when you are talking about anti-corruption. You are a symbol of honesty and truth, why these corrupt people are coming to you'.

I said, 'I want all the corrupt people to come to me. Only if they come to me can they become better'.

So I don't close my door to anybody. I am telling you the same, imperfect people are there, they push your buttons and make you get angry. Know that they are there to make you strong. How you can keep your equanimity and yet help them from where they are to where they could be is what you need to see.

172. Why are love marriages and arranged marriages increasingly leading to divorces?

Sri Sri: Yes, divorce is happening day by day while family values are eroding, the generation gap is widening and interdependence is being forgotten. Husband and wife forget that they are interdependent. They need each other and both look for independence. I haven't done any research on this why this is happening (laughter) but if some of you do that research and publish a paper it will be good.

Atleast people will be aware of these pitfalls. Whether it is a love marriage or arranged marriage, marriage is always a chance, if it clicks it is a chance.

Sometimes it may appear to have clicked for a short period of time but in the long run, it becomes a question mark and vice versa also. Sometimes in the beginning it may appear to be completely incompatible but as time goes it becomes very compatible. It is like a chameleon – changing colors all the time. If someone can see this, they have a hope and if

it appears to be not so, then move on without guilt because there is no point in suffering life long. If you have given 100 percent then you better move on your path and let the other move on his/her path rather making the whole live of both, miserable. But the question is whether you have given your 100 percent, have you made all the effort to make it work? That is important.

173. If a boy and a girl are getting married, should horoscopes be matched or not? What is the importance of horoscope matching when it comes to marriage? Is it necessary to match horoscopes for a good marriage?

Sri Sri: You can match horoscopes, it is fine. If there is a match it is really good, but if the horoscopes don't match, it is okay. Check if the horoscopes are correct or not. Sometimes they are manipulated to suit someone's needs. If you like someone in all other aspects, and everything seems okay, then its fine; you should go ahead and marry the person. Just pray! Everything is acceptable.

Astrology is a science but all astrologers are not scientists (laughter). First of all, you don't know whether the time of your birth and all other factors are right or not. Sometimes, we don't keep records and there are various factors. There is probability in all those factors. So, if you find someone who is good, the astrologer says, 'Good, it does have a value but it is always with a pinch of salt'.

It is said that there was a great astrologer of this country and he made all the horoscopes of his daughter. But his daughter's marriage didn't work. It was quoted as a probability factor. In all scientific experiments, there is always a probability factor – may be, may not be. So we must take it with that probability and not as definite.

174. What makes one a good life partner? What attributes to look for in a good life-partner?

Sri Sri: I have no idea, or experience. You should ask people who have been successful in finding a good life partner.

Maybe you can try this one idea, whomsoever you choose as your life partner, contribute towards their life, and don't demand anything. The moment you start demanding, you become miserable.

If you demand from your husband (or wife), that he (or she) should do this, one-day or the other, it will make you miserable.

The second biggest problem will be your in-laws. Whatever you do, they will not be very pleased and they will comment on it and you will get upset. This you should stop. Win them over with your service and your love.

When a daughter-in-law comes, if she is very loving, within the first six months she will win the hearts of the family. This skill you must learn: how to win the hearts of the people. Go with a sense of seva, a sense of total sacrifice for that family. Even a few months like this will earn you a lot of goodwill from your in-laws.

So with a big mind and big heart, win over the new family you got into, and all will be fine.

175. Changing Mindsets

It is important to know about interpersonal relationships. What keeps and what really disturbs interpersonal relationships? The relationship gets disturbed when disagreement begins.

Just look at yourself. Have you always agreed with yourself? You had some idea yesterday; today you may have a different idea. Five years back you had other ideas that do not necessarily agree with the ideas that you have today. So when you have disagreement with yourself, why should it not happen with someone else?

The 'someone' you have a disagreement with is just a photocopy of your old or the new self. So you need to take a look at your own thought patterns and emotional patterns, there is a rhythm in them and there is a rhythm in the consciousness. We need to find a harmony between all these rhythms within us and that's what is called spirituality.

Spirituality is not just fantasizing; it's observing your own existence. Have we thoroughly known our body? You can know someone else's body but have you experienced your own body? Experiencing your own body, your breath, your mind, your emotion and the source of your life is meditation. Meditation is experiencing the life force and being conscious of it; and it is done effortlessly.

For maintaining interpersonal relationships, you have to first have a relationship with yourself. Your relationship with yourself is called integrity. If you have no relationship with yourself, that's called lack of integrity. Secondly, being informal keeps your interpersonal relationship strong, for it gives space for mistakes to happen. You cannot expect perfection in any relationship or situation.

Today one of the biggest problems with the world is emotional instability. When we create an informal outlook and cordial environment around us, we grease the friction and become the master of our environment and not feel helpless about what is happening around us.

Life is very complex. There is no set formula. When you think that you are very honest, that you are righteous, you become a little stiff inside without even knowing it. You point your finger towards others and become intolerant. When you recognize that there are flaws in you, you are then able to accommodate the flaws in other persons.

That's why it is said, "Do a good deed and forget about it". It is not only your vices or bad qualities that will harm you. Even your good qualities can make you stiff, rude and angry. That is why you should surrender both bad and good qualities. Relax and let go.

176. Please tell us about the relationship with God.

Sri Sri: See God is referred in 3 persons. He, You and I. The first, second and third person.

Most people are happy addressing God in 3rd person because it's very safe. There is no relationship at all. Somewhere in the clouds. He, She, somewhere else, no? Third person. It's a way you can escape from being in touch with the reality.

Seeing God in the person next to you, seeing you as God. Seeing everyone around you as God. Addressing 'You', that is more difficult.

How can you say you are God? Then you may punish me or I'll have to listen to whatever you say. (Laughter) How you could be God? Not safe and saying I am God, forget about it, impossible. Because the moment I look at myself, so much imperfection. With all this imperfection how I could be God? Not possible. Better keep God in the 3rd person and live the life the way we live. Safer. This is the attitude. We are not connecting with the reality. There is no relationship with the divine.

Relationship is what? Feeling no separation, I am you; you are me. You are part of me I am part of you.

If someone who is part of you is insulted you feel as though you are insulted. Don't you? If someone who is part of you is praised, you feel happy as though you are praised.

In 3rd person how can this happen? Him. That's why Jesus said, if you have to go to my father, you have to go through me, there is no other way, because I'm right in front of you. You cannot love me; you think you will love the 3rd person?

And this is what Buddha said and all the enlightened masters said, if you have to go to God you have to go through Master. Because master is the second person, he is the link between the 3rd person and the 1st person and coming to the master he'll make you realize that divine is within you. You are within God and God is within you and this can happen when the stresses, tension, worries, anxieties are all lifted off from the mind.

Mind is that cover that is holding the divinity within us. Once that wrapping paper is unwrapped you will find oh this beautiful gift is here within us. You know its like everyone has been giving a Christmas package, beautiful package and they leave with the beautiful gift without even opening it.

Do you know what I'm saying? Suppose a set of gifts are bought and given to everyone and they're all like 'beautiful gift' and they're holding the wrapping papers. They're happy just looking at the wrapping papers. Pass the wrapping paper. All the charm and joy in the world is just a wrapping paper. Colourful and beautiful, glittery designs. You know they have very beautiful wrapping paper these days (Laughter). So relationship with God is moving from the 3rd person to the 1st person.

177. The Mind

This universe is so beautiful. There are so many types of flowers, fruits, trees, animals, human beings; such variety has been created so that you can be happy. But the human mind is such that it does not allow you to be happy. Even in the best of places, the mind goes on with the memory of something that happened in the past; this is what is so amazing. The mind is the biggest mystery.

Your own mind can be your best friend or your worst enemy. The mind is responsible for our happiness as well as misery. When the mind is in the present moment, everything appears to be beautiful. However, when the mind is a mess; even in the best of places, it can find a thousand reasons to be miserable.

There are five modulations of the mind:

First, the mind wants proof for everything. How can you get proof for everything? Impossible!

Second, the mind does not understand things the way they actually are, but thinks something else. You thought something; a little later found out it was not actually like that; a little later, concepts break down. This is called Viparyaya.

Third, the mind has its own imagination; when nothing of the sort actually exists.

Fourth, the mind falls asleep. If it is not thinking of anything, then it falls asleep.

Fifth, the mind is stuck in the memory of the past, or worried about the future.

These five modulations prevent one from being alive in the present moment and enjoying. Yoga brings the shift; it helps you to sail over the modulations of the mind.

Let us examine the five factors that influence the mind: space, time, food, past impressions, and associations and actions.

Space: The place you are in. Every place you are in has a different impact on the mind. Even in your house, you can see that you feel different in different rooms. A place where there has

been singing, chanting and meditation has a different influence on the mind. Suppose you like a particular place, you may find that a little later it will not be the same.

Time: Time is also a factor. Different times of the day and year have different influences on the mind.

Food: Different types of food that you eat influence you for a few days.

Past impressions or karmas: have a different impact on the mind. Awareness, alertness, knowledge and meditation all help erase past impressions.

Associations and actions: The people and events you are associated with influence your mind. With certain people your mind behaves one way and with others a different way.

Although these five factors influence your life and your mind, know that the Self is more powerful. As you grow in knowledge, you influence them all.

178. Gurudev, how to come out of attachment? And if people deceive us, how to come out of that?

Sri Sri: If someone deceives you, they are going to face the music. They will face the consequences. That is the law of karma. You got deceived because you were not careful. You should have been careful, isn't it? So you learnt a lesson when somebody deceived you. Now move on!

Today, you should look back and see what life would have been without this knowledge. Where would you have been? Just imagine, 'If I had no knowledge, no meditation, no sadhana, no satsang, where I would have been?'

One of the saints of the middle ages, a great yogi said, 'Who drinks the nectar? One who has a Guru? One who doesn't have a Guru in their life, he goes thirsty, he has no juice in his life; he does not know true joy. But one who has a Guru drinks the nectar; again and again he drinks the nectar'.

That is to indicate that the bliss is inside of us and if you have the Guru, the wisdom, the knowledge, you are able to get the access to it. When that is not there, then you go thirsty.

179. How sadhana (spiritual practices) can bestow freedom

Sri Sri: "To the degree that you are awake, everything around you brings you knowledge. If you are not awake, then even the most precious knowledge does not make any sense".

(Suddenly there was much noise from outside and someone went to shut the window).

"Awareness depends upon your ability to shut your windows. When there is a storm you need to shut your windows, otherwise you will get wet. When it is hot and suffocating inside, you need to open your windows.

Your senses are like the windows. When you have the ability to open and shut your windows at your will then you are free and you are awake. When your windows cannot be shut or opened, you are bound. Attending to that is sadhana or practice".

180. Gurudev what thoughts come to your mind when another spiritual leader is caught in disgraceful act?

Sri Sri: Compassion and wonder. First of all compassion, someone who owns a jewellery shop will not go and steal a kilo of banana or apple. If someone does that it is only wonder and on other hand it is compassion. There must be some deep-rooted ignorance. Or knowingly unknowingly if they do mistakes there is no point in getting angry over them. You can just wonder how such person can do this. First of all they can't do it. You can only wonder.

This man was climbing to a height, slipped and fallen. He has succumbed to his base cravings or aversions and if they are genuine, they will take punishment on their own. If they realize it they should punish themselves. If not, then they should not be referred to as spiritual leaders. They are only using spiritual peel for their own benefit.

181. Is it possible to make career out of spiritual practices?

Sri Sri: Spiritual practices cannot be used to make career. But Art of Living does have many institutes, department. You do have an opportunity; just contact our Human Resources wing.

182. What kinds of questions or people make you uncomfortable?

Sri Sri: So far I don't remember. I don't feel uncomfortable with anybody till now, I don't know about future.

183. You give comfort to so many in fears. What fear or anxiety you had in your life?

Sri Sri: Hmm... I can't relate to anxiety, but there has been a moment of tiredness. During Tsunami I was travelling 48 hours, it was tiring. In Iraq when I went, Government gave me

twelve vehicles, including two tankers for my safety. So to travel half an hour, I used to take two hours. It was sort of thrill not anxiety for me and what else, long back in Kashmir when there were militants, it was little disappointing.

In Sri Lanka when I went, I wanted to make peace; I met President and also spoke to Prabhakaran. I told him don't go to war, come and make peace. But he did not listen. That was little disappointing thing. I stayed there for a day. I could see that 80,000 people will be destroyed if this one man's ego is not settled down. War could have been avoided. People down his line were also not interested. They told me that please meet our boss and persuade him to stop war. But he did not listen.

Once again, in North Korea, South Korea, lot of tension was happenings. I went to meet new young President to give him some sense as he was surrounded by mafia. These things happen.

184. What are your thoughts on presence of minority faiths in India, their current state and way forward?

Sri Sri: It should be there. Just imagine if during Diwali everybody takes holidays, no body to take care of airports, etc. day to day activities. Even day-to-day social needs will be problem. Minority should not keep themselves isolated. They should mingle with majority and majority should shake hands with minority. Minority should realize that majority is not different set of people they are part of them. Participating in each other's festivals is essential for both.

185. I am 30 years old and honestly I don't know what I want from my life. How do I figure out?

Sri Sri: Shift this from 'What I want?' to 'What people around me wants, what nation wants?' What you could do to better the nation, to better society.

186. Gurudev, what are your comments on 'extra-marital affair'?

Sri Sri: I am not qualified to answer. Go to a counsellor and talk amongst yourself.

187. Gurudev, what is the difference between religion and spirituality?

Sri Sri: Religion is what you are born with; Spirituality is what you acquire. Religion is belief. Spirituality is experiences. Religion keeps society divided. Spirituality unites it.

188. It is said that Lord Shiva himself came to India and Yoga was given to India. What qualified India to get such opportunity?

Sri Sri: There are many things India has been bestowed with. Yoga, Vedic heritage, culture goes back 10,000 years old. It is said that first book of wisdom was written 10,000 years ago. Whatever your religion maybe, you must appreciate and adopt the culture of land where you are situated.

189. What are the "do's and don't's" for Karma?

Sri Sri: The do's and don't's of Karma is that you should listen to your own conscience, your gut feeling. Don't do to others which you don't want to be done with you and if you see long term benefit in doing something but short term pain then you should do it and if you see short term pleasure but long term loss then you should not do that.

190. Any connection between the number of souls waiting to take birth and increase in human population?

Sri Sri: Many species are getting extinguished now. Maybe they all want to be born as human beings. There are far less sparrows, etc., species.

191. In Patanjali Yoga sutra, one of them is bhranti darshan. Ancient saints, poets, saw God. Meera saw Krishna, was that also bhranti darshan?

Sri Sri: It can be. Because all the goddess', gods' experience comes as light rather than form. But it is okay that forms can also be perceived. This is called yog-maya. You get some visions and when you are not perfected, then initial stage it will be mix of imagination. You can be misguided. You should always put it to the test of intellect. Prayer will not go unanswered; it might get answered later, but will never go unanswered. Ignorance is the biggest enemy of human being.

192. What is the source of God?

Sri Sri: It is like asking, where is the sky coming from? That which has no beginning, no end is sky. If God has a source then it is no God. God is the source of everything else.

Do good deeds, be happy. You don't have to keep stress, anxiety, dump it. What are Masters for? You just pray and move ahead with faith. When you keep faith then you get the fruit. When people come from city on Sunday for satsang, they have faith that if they eat ashram Prasad their stomach pain gets cured! Some people have it here, some take back to home.

Not one or two, many people have such experiences. Do whatever you can do in present, don't worry about future.

193. If God is everywhere then why do people fall sick?

Sri Sri: It is the nature of body, to fall sick sometimes, to be fit other times. If your capacity to work is four hours and you work for eight hours then you might fall sick.

194. Which is that place where the fear of death doesn't come?

Sri Sri: When you are in mediation you don't fear death. How many birthdays today, stand up. Everyone greet them.

All these feelings and emotions come and go. Sometimes you feel so dry like everything has disappeared. All your good feelings: love, dedication suddenly goes away; but suddenly they appear too. So these are just passing phases in life, just keep moving on.

195. Window Shutter

To the degree that you are awake, everything around you brings you knowledge. If you are not awake, then even the most precious knowledge does not make any sense.

(Suddenly there was much noise from outside and Kiran went to shut the window).

Sri Sri: Awareness depends upon your ability to shut your windows. When there is a storm you need to shut your windows, otherwise you will get wet.

When it is hot and suffocating inside, you need to open your windows. Your senses are like the windows. When you have the ability to open and shut your windows at your will then you are free and you are awake. When your windows cannot be shut or opened, you are bound.

Attending to that is sadhana or practice.

196. Mind is like Water

Your body is like a hard shell and your mind, the inner self is like water. You are like water inside. Nature of water is cooling and flowing. But when the innermost, which is like water, is burning with jealousy, anger, frustration and all the fires you put inside, then the water boils and its cooling nature disappears.

Then how does one cool the water? Just imagine a pot and underneath are all these burning sticks. To cool the water you have to remove these sticks. All emotions are linked with people, objects and events.

Catching on to objects, people or relationships hinders freedom, liberation. You are hankering for some greater joy that is not there, not going to be there.

So, remove all this firewood and the water will become cooler. Because "cool" is the nature of water. When all these other negative stresses, burning sticks are removed, water will possess all its natural qualities — humbleness, humility, and naturalness — just like the nature of water, which flows down.

In the Bhagavad Geeta, Lord Krishna talks about all the good qualities and then He adds that they are already in you. Just like in an atom, the core is positive and the negativity is peripheral. Know that it's not in the core.

Your nature is calmness, coolness. If it weren't your nature, you would never feel at home in it.

Mind means moods, thoughts, opinions, ideas, all these things that we collect and, 'no mind' is meditation. Yoga, meditation and spirituality are about giving comfort to your soul and transforming all the negative tendencies in the mind.

When you meditate, you go off the influence of the mind and go into the self. The mantra of knowledge is — in this world there is no other. The mantra of love is — there is no one who doesn't belong to me.

When the mind is free from all impressions and concepts, you are liberated. When you know that everything is changing — all relationships, people, body, feelings — suddenly the mind, which clings on to misery, comes back to you.

A fulfillment, centeredness, a subtle solid strength comes from within. Then if fame comes, money comes, it doesn't touch you. It comes or doesn't come, it doesn't matter to you.

197. "Nothing in Nature lives for itself. Rivers don't drink their own water. Trees don't eat their own fruit. The Sun doesn't shine for itself. Flowers don't spread fragrance for themselves. Living for others is the rule of Nature".

198. When we develop the ability to listen to negative comments without losing temper or confidence. It means now we've become matured, mentally strong & truly educated.

199. Don't cry over past, it's gone. Don't stress on future, it hasn't arrived. Live in present and make it beautiful.

200. Love is when there is no expectation, when expectation is there it means there is attachment.

201. What is your message for Valentine's Day?

Sri Sri: Let nature be your valentine. This is the message for Valentine's Day. I have said before that let Divine be your Valentine but today am saying let nature be your valentine. So let's preserve the nature, water, earth, seeds, plants, air, and energy. This is our responsibility.

It's so difficult to express ones feelings. It is in fact inexpressible. At the same time you can't hide them at all. On one level it never hides, feelings get expressed. On same note I would say that you totally cannot express your feelings. Mankind has been making all sorts of efforts from time and memorial making the heart shape, getting rose flowers to express the feelings.

All our gesture actions are only to express our feelings yet it remains unexpressed and that's the beauty of it. That's how love continues. Love becomes eternal. If you have totally expressed it then it's finished, nothing remains. But it doesn't happen like that. You express but still something remains unexpressed. You still feel it's not enough. You know, only when you breakup you say enough is enough. When the pond of love dries down then you say enough is enough! No more!

But in love you don't feel enough. There is no completion. You cannot completely express your feelings.

One who is in love would say this 'I could not express my feelings. If there is an effort to express oneself that continues and on Valentine's Day is one such occasion when people try to express their love and you don't need to ask people would you be my valentine. You should take it for granted that they are your valentines and they love you. Never we should doubt the love of someone for us. We should always take it for granted that everyone loves us. That's it! Sometime they may not be expressible.

Some people have reserve to express may be in the next lifetime! Some are expressing now. Some might express after 10 or 20 years. Some who is rude and rough will behave not so nice with us do have love for us, but they have only reserved it for us in the future lifetimes. Then you see in life, that from your side you will feel secure, complete, accepted and you feel the oneness, oneness with this whole Universe. So this Valentine's Day you can change your valentine. This Valentine Day you can say, Nature is my Valentine.

You become flower to yourself. You don't have to buy a rose. You imagine yourself as a rose. You yourself are the king or queen of flowers. You have the beauty and fragrance. See, there are many flowers which have fantastic fragrance but it's not so beautiful to look at or it doesn't have the texture or the beauty and there are some flowers which are beautiful to look at but there is no fragrance.

Rose has both and that is why it is called the king or queen of flowers because it has fragrance and beauty. This is what is expected of any Valentine, any beloved. If they just appear beautiful, not enough! They should exuberate the fragrance. Some may have fragrance but they are not expressing it in their life. If their mind or actions are not what you perceive as expression of true love then they miss to communicate that. So communication is a very important aspect and Valentine Day is also a day to communicate that to your loved person.

You can see 2 things in the whole world. In India people do not express their love especially in the rural areas, they have not loved but it is all hidden underneath and it gets expressed in action though but they don't verbalize at all. You might agree with me, most of your parents would have never told each other 'I Love You'. Even the parents would have never said to their children 'Oh I love you my dear'. They have never said it in their whole life but not that they don't have love. They have a lot of love but they don't express or verbalize it.

The other thing is they say 'I love you' so many times! Even though there are no feelings they say, 'My darling I love you', every day. In the face there is tension but the words don't. So you verbalize quite a lot in the west and here you don't express it at all.

I would say that you stay somewhere in between, neither too much expression nor no expression. Somewhere in the middle we must be. The best of all East and the best of West. Sharpness of mind and the softness of the heart. You need both. We need a civilized behaviour and informal atmosphere. These two things, if you too informal then you push and pull and go over the others. It may appear very rude to someone.

In Asia this is a problem. People feel so much at home that they don't even worry about who is sitting and go all the way above them. It appears very rude to other cultures. If you come from another culture, it will appear very rude and uncivilized. But here it is a sense of belongingness.

At the same time in some cultures we are so strict and so disciplined and we want everything to be perfect it can't tolerate even small things go wrong here and there. We have to get out of that mindset as well. We have to feel at home. We have to be in the moment. Something has happened in the morning, no need to carry it in our mind. The incident, the event has happened, it is finished!

Somebody has jumped the line or sat in the place where you planned to sit, that can completely upset you for a long time. Let's not allow that to happen. Whatever happened

happened. The whole life is an education, an education for oneself and others. Every event educates us and there is something good that comes out of every event.

You have two choices. Either gets so uptight or unhappy about things not happening on time or see the present moment as inevitable and do your best and keep smiling. What can you do? Suppose you are stuck in traffic, what do you do? Get frustrated and unhappy or sing! Sing in the traffic jam. That's Art of Living. Taking life easy. Not just only taking life easy, taking life easy with utmost sincerity and commitment. Commitment to whatever goal or whatever purpose we have taken in life.

202. How to be in action and not increase karma?

Sri Sri: We do many actions and its impression does not stay in our mind. This morning you had breakfast. If I ask you a week later, what did you have for breakfast on Saturday morning you will not remember it. Unless it was some occasion or something happened then you will remember it. If you are able to tell me, then you have that karma. So certain activities and actions do not create an imprint or an impression on the mind. Then there is no karma. So any impression that is compelling is what karma is.

For example you have habit of drinking coffee every day and one morning you wake up and there is no coffee available or you decide not to have coffee, then what do you get? I have never had coffee, but I have heard people saying they get a headache. This is coffee karma! When you don't do it there is a reaction. You can get over that karma, so instead of taking coffee you can take an aspirin or drink a lot of water, bear with it for a few minutes, then you get used to for a few days then you don't get that headache any more. So this is how you got over the Coffee karma.

Similarly the people who are smoking, their compulsion to smoke is smoking karma. But if you say no to it, every habit is nothing but karma pattern, and if you say no it you are already getting over the karma.

203. Why did the concept of enlightenment come up? Who was the first one to get liberated?

Sri Sri: it's like asking when the concept of blossoming came up. Everything is already a bud. Does a bud not blossom? Of course it does! Similarly, fully blossoming human potential is enlightenment. Nothing like a big lightning strikes you from heaven and you get enlightened. It's becoming a child again, coming back to your original nature. That is what it.

204. In the realm of spirituality is there any spiritual war or spiritual jealousy?

Sri Sri: My goodness! Absolutely not. Then it is no more spiritual. Yes there are wars in the name of religion. This is like asking; in light is there darkness? Is there any disturbance in peace? If there is any disturbance in peace, will it be called peace? That's it.

205. Even after doing 100% people expect more. It is very frustrating. How to deal with it?

Sri Sri: You don't need to be frustrated about it. You do what is in your capacity. Stretch a little bit more than you think you can do. You will find that you have much more abilities, many more capabilities. So any expectation, you can take it as a challenge to expand and express. So when you take it as a challenge you don't get frustrated. While you are playing a game, you should give your 100% and even if you lose it, nobody will hold it against you.

206. I have lost my place in society. I feel like taking Sanyaas. What do I do?

Sri Sri: Sanyaas comes from fulfillment not from running away from life or running away from reality. It's not running away. It's staying and being centered. That is what Sanyaas is. Yes, if you are too feverish and too passionate, it's good to have a little dispassion. Dispassion is like breathing out, passion is like breathing in. If you are breathing in only without breathing out, then you are in trouble. Some degree of dispassion, everybody has. It grows with life and maturity.

Just see when you were a baby, what were you doing. You were holding on to your mother's garments even while sleeping. Or you were so fond of cotton candies and different ice creams and as grew up these things started losing its significance. As an adult when someone offers you a sweet you say no. A kid never says no to it. So some amount of dispassion has come. Then you are holding on to toys, then when you grow up there is a dispassion for toys has come in, for food has come in and as you grow older and older even the attachment to your friend's circle also diminishes. These are all dispassion.

So in life you have so many successes, so many failures, you don't mind all that and every businessman know this, he is used to it. When you bear loss, you have to move on! That moving on is dispassion.

Suppose you had an investment and the stock market crashed. What do you do? You move on. You cannot go on cribbing about it, crying about it. You won't be able to think about investing in the next one. So you have to digest that, the bitter pill. Swallowing a bitter pill, digesting it, letting go, you can call it in so many words. But one word I like is dispassion. I would use this word dispassion. But it is not contrary to passion. It goes along with passion. Dispassion keeps you sane and gives you much needed inner comfort. Adi Shankar in one of His poems wrote, what joy does dispassion not bring you? Meaning dispassion provides you

all types of joy.

207. How to get rid of the deep-rooted self-centeredness in me?

Sri Sri: You are a good person or otherwise you will not even ask this question. Know that you have all the good qualities in you. You should simply assume you have them. Don't examine yourself too much and too often. When you feel that you are getting selfish, come on, wake up and do some random acts of kindness. Do something that would make others happy. That's all. It's so simple!

Whenever you feel that you are thinking too much about yourself, just join the seva team here. There are so many seva projects happening there is joy, there is contentment, and there is job satisfaction. All three things come to you. Engage in service activities. The world needs you.

208. Is it ok to not want to meditate, do seva or sadhana? What is wrong with me?

Sri Sri: It indicates that you are very tired. Mentally and physically. So rest well but eat less. If you eat a lot and then you rest then restlessness increases. If you eat little less, so that the food gets digested and then rest, that will take away all the tiredness. You will feel lazy doing any exercise all-alone but if you exercise in group it helps you to get the lethargy in the body, the sluggishness in the mind.

209. How do I know the girl I like is the one for me and am I right for her?

Sri Sri: This you have to ask her. Very simple. You have to ask her. If you feel that you are not up to the mark, you can straight start being up to the mark. Improve your qualities. Otherwise she will teach you anyway. The spouse can bring the best out of you or the worst out of you. So when the best comes out of you, keep it and when the worst comes out of you leave it, let it disappear from you, let it go away from you.

210. "In the whole creation the origin is never seen. The seed is sprouting; inside the seed what is happening is not known. Similarly a baby is getting formed in the womb it is not visible outside. A river is born somewhere but you can never really go to the source of the river. So the origin remains a secret. Similarly the end is also a secret. Your origin is a secret and after your death what happens is also a secret. Very interesting from the subtle to the gross to the subtle again and from the subtle how it comes to the gross is also another secret.

So when you look at the secret with the amazement or the amusement in the mind, 'Wow!' This is the amusement is the basis for yoga. When you are amused by creation that means

the preface of Yoga has started. Children are amazed by everything they look flowers and think it's amazing or they look at stars with amusement. So the amazement or amusement dawns in life then Yoga has also started. The ground for Yoga is being amazed".

211. You have launched Aaplap. What is the importance of Arts in the world and in the individual?

Sri Sri: Here in the Art of Living we always take everything in a very holistic way. Music is an integral part of life. In all the cultures of the world, music is part of life and babies, first they sing and then only they talk. Music comes first, language comes later. Have you seen babies go 'aaa', 'ooo'? Singing comes first and then they understand language. So it's important to have music as part of life.

212. You have said present moment is vast and deep. Please give some hint about it.

Sri Sri: This is it. This is the hint. It is vast and deep!

213. Recently there was a comedy language where abusive language was used. It was then removed. Is Indian culture restricting freedom of expression or was it right?

Sri Sri: World over there are certain movies, certain videos, which are cautioned not to be seen by children, young people. In America, for every movie there is a rating underneath it, what is in the movie, whether it is ok to be seen by children or only adults should see it. Because if children if they hear abusive language, it is not nice. If they become violent in their life, they not only destroy themselves, they destroy the environment and people around. So one should be cautious. You can have a lot of fun without being violent and abusive.

214. Does God control life or is it the flow of destiny?

Sri Sri: See, what is destiny? Something, which is not in your control, right? A child's destiny is different from an adult's destiny. A baby cannot run, you have to lift the baby. So the destiny of the baby is different from that of an adult. A baby is lying and it starts raining, a baby cannot do anything, it cannot take an umbrella, right? It is destiny. But if you are in the rain, can you take an umbrella? (Yes) So you're destiny is different. Life is a combination of free will and destiny. Free will is that which you can do and destiny is that which you cannot do.

215. How does the individual work when their individuality is already dissolved?

Sri Sri: These are two dimensions. They lead an individual life and at the same time they also lead a bigger life. Like you when you sleep what is happening? Your individuality is dissolving into cosmic nothingness. When you wake up, you have your roles to play. Similarly when you meditate, what happens? You are dissolved and what happens when you come out of meditation into action? Individuality takes over. So life is a combination of the individual and the universal.

There is one aspect in us that is universal. In the Upanishads there is a beautiful story. It says on one branch, two birds are sitting. One is watching and the other is eating. Similarly inside you, there is one thing that is universal, one is just watching, simply existing. Another thing that acts, the individual self. So like that are you forms or are you formless? You are both! Your body is form, mind is formless. Right? There are people who ask how is it possible? You are either form or formless. How can you be both? This is wrong logic.

216. Some thoughts keep coming again and again. What to do?

Sri Sri: The more you try to resist them, the more they come. Correct? So when they come you say, 'Ok I am ready. Ok come, sit'. You will see it disappears. In the realm of the mind, what you resist will persist.

217. I was used to work in the financial markets and had to take a lot of risks. I have seen you taking a lot of risks. How do you manage risks?

Sri Sri: Risk management, is it? Well you don't have to manage it. You just jump into it and move on. Knowing very well only the best can come out of it.

218. In the news today, Mongolian scientists have found a 200-year-old Buddhist monk who is believed to be still as he is in a meditative state and is said to be close to Nirvana. Is it possible?

Sri Sri: Meditative state is possible and it does impact the body also, definitely. The body will not decay for some time. We don't know whether someone is still alive or not from two thousand years ago. This we have to see. Why would somebody hold on to their body for two thousand years. Would you hold on to the same dress for fifty years? When you don't want to hold on to the same dress, why would you want to hold on to the body for so long? I don't want to say it is a lie or not. But body may stop decaying, but it's not necessary that the soul holds on to the body. If a soul is holding on to the body it is not enlightened.

219. What is the difference between ethics and spirituality?

Sri Sri: Yes spirituality connects all aspects of life. Ethics is something to do with your relationship with people. Spirituality is to do with your relationship with yourself and the Universe.

220. If new ideas are not being accepted by the larger team, what should one do?

Sri Sri: New idea come sometimes it takes time for people to understand so you should keep pursuing new ideas. But sometimes the new ideas may be completely impractical. So we should not hold on to our idea just because it is new and just because it is ours. Often when ideas come and we find it very exciting and we hold on to idea, and we shut our eyes and ears to other's inputs.

In this situation it becomes very hard for other people to deal with you because you think you have great idea and others feel it is totally, completely impractical, it cannot be executed. So if you can convince people in a team about your idea, well and good and if they really think it is impossible and if your feeling, gut feeling, your intuition says this I want to pursue, just hold on to it and pursue it.

221. Could you talk about Jyotish? How does the position of stars affect my life here?

Sri Sri: See everything affects everything else in this Universe. You are just walking on the street and a child starts crying, don't you get affected by it? You are just walking on the street and someone falls off the bicycle or motorbike or if you see an accident, doesn't it affect you? It does! So little things do affect you. One small incident affects you.

The position of Sun, Moon, and stars do affect you. During full moon and new Moon, people in mental hospitals go through a high and low. That's why they are called lunatic, as they are affected by the Moon. Moon affects that mind.

Even the Vedas say that mind and Moon have connections. So the obvious connection is mind and Moon. Another obvious connection is Sun's affect on your life. Summer your moods are different. Winter your mood is different. Fall and Spring the mood changes.

The position of the Sun and Moon does affect your mind and even morning and night, see morning what is the state of your mind and evening what is the state of your mind. So all this affects you. But you should know that your Self is stronger. They can only affect you're the mind and intellect. Bu the Self they cannot. You are the pure consciousness, the still mind or the Self within you can overcome all the affects of all the external stimuli, effects and that is why it is 'Om Namah Shivayah' is the mantra which can nullify all other negative vibrations.

222. If we are all made up of Love then why don't we feel it?

Sri Sri: That is the thing. We all keep breathing day and night but you don't feel it, you feel it only when you do pranayama or when you have a problem with your breathing! Though air is everywhere, you only feel it when it blows or when you stand near a fan or a cooler. Right?

223. What qualities do you need to become a great Kathakar (Story Teller) of Srimad Bhagavatam?

Sri Sri: Study it in depth and believe in it and share it. It has to come from your heart. Whatever we speak should have the authenticity of our experience.

224. I have a lot of skills, I just want to know how to make someone fall in love with me.

Sri Sri: I have no idea! I have no idea how you can make someone fall in love with you! What you can do is you just drop this idea or this desire. Then the problem might get automatically solved! It is strange but true, if you want people to appreciate you, you desire for others to appreciate you, they stop short of appreciating you. They come this far and then they stop appreciating you. So better you let go.

225. I have a million dollar question. Why do you love me so much?

Sri Sri: I don't want to take anything expensive from you. Keep it with you and keep asking, enjoy that question!

226. How does the Soul select the body?

Sri Sri: I can't answer this, it's the biggest secret and it will remain a secret. One of the Panch Maha Rahasya, the five great secrets. This is one of them. You can't even talk about it.

227. During meditation should sit erect or let go and relax.

Sri Sri: Start with sitting erects and then let go.

228. The Yoga sutras talk about Siddhis. What are Siddhis?

Sri Sri: Siddhi means perfection. Perfection in applying the transcendental in the material

field. That is Siddhi. Perfection of applying the absolute, abstract, infinite consciousness into relative world.

229. When I work I get tired and when I rest then I get stuck in laziness. What to do?

Sri Sri: Listen to your body. When the body gets tired relax and when the body is relaxed, when you have already slept for five to six hours, then sit and meditate. If even after sleeping you feel tired then you get it checked out by the doctor. If your blood sugar or cholesterol levels are not ok then you will face this problem and if there is deficiency of vitamin D3 in your body. D3 is a big problem these days this because of too much pesticides in the food that we eat.

The pesticides become Sun blockers in the body. People so proudly say that there are no bugs in the grains. I say those grains that even the bugs don't like, why do you eat them? There are so many preservatives and pesticides in them. These things create Sun blocks in the body. When the Sun block is created we cannot absorb the sunlight in the body. Then Vitamin D3 deficiency arises. With that you feel tired even after a good night's sleep. So watch out for it. Vitamin deficiency, cholesterol, sugar and lack of exercise cause tiredness. You should exercise everyday. Walk a little, do some surya namaskars, do something.

230. Is it needed for Adharma to rise for Krishna to be born?

Sri Sri: There is plenty of it, you don't have to worry about it. Adharma keeps coming. Adharma remains in some part of the world at all times. You can never get rid of it totally from the planet. It will remain. Like Dharma imperishable, you cannot get rid of it, so is Adharma.

231. I am failing in every aspect of life. I don't know what to do?

Sri Sri: Don't worry. It's just a matter of time. It will be ok. Have patience. Meditate and keep faith. Everything will be ok.

232. What skills do we use to convince pseudo intellectuals who believe that spirituality is blind faith?

Sri Sri: You should talk straight with them and tell them that they are prejudiced. These people need to be scolded only then they will understand. Tell them how they are wasting their life just eating and sleeping. You can make an intelligent understand by arguments, a person with heart, by love and if they don't have both then you have to scold them to make them understand!

233. If God knows everything then why should one keep praying and asking for things? Isn't that being greedy?

Sri Sri: Correct, you should have the faith but sometimes you feel compelled you can ask also. See of course when you go home for dinner, your mother makes the food; you don't need to ask her. But sometimes when you need one more idli or chapatti, there is nothing wrong in asking, right? It is your mother, why should you not ask? Do you always think mother knows what you want and not ask anything from mother? No, you ask right? When you need something you can ask.

234. Please give us some tips on parenting.

Sri Sri: It is very difficult for me to talk about parenting. I have no experience. But I can give you some ideas through observation. You have to put this into your experience and see. If you are very orderly, children will make you chaotic. Children are best to break your boundaries. So, your children teach you a lot that others may not be able to.

The first thing for us is to observe a kid, its tendencies, and the direction the kid is taking. It is a two-way journey. What do you want to learn from them? And what do you want to teach them? Don't try to put them through your own vision. You have to share your vision with them and persuade them if their vision is wrong.

Every child has come to this planet with certain tendencies, certain basics which cannot be changed and he/she acquires certain things, which can be controlled. This is one thing that we have to keep in our mind. If you tell children not to lie, and ask them to reply a phone call saying you are not at home, this is simply not going to work. Having an argument in front of your children will make it worse. If you want to have some argument between you and your spouse, you better give your children some job, and then fight as much as you can. But by the time they come back, you better patch up.

Expose them to multifarious activities. This has to be done before a child is 10 or 11. You should take the child to science, arts and expose them to all the faculties including doing service. On one Sunday, give them some chocolates and ask them to distribute to the poorest people. Once or twice in an year, take them to slum and ask them to do social service. This would enhance their personality in some unknown manner and same thing in studies.

You have to expose them to both science and music. Knowledge, music and meditation – all three are required to make the education complete. Then you can call someone educated and civilized. So, make sure that children learn music and yoga and also make sure that the children have a scientific tempo, and they ask questions. Encourage them to ask questions. A child starts asking questions at the age of three. Then on they keep asking questions.

Then see the personality of your child. See that they interact with various age groups. You can understand with this whether they are developing any superiority or inferiority complex, or if they are becoming introvert or extrovert and you can play a very important role here. Play some games with them, and encourage them to interact with all the age groups, and we can mold their personality to a very central, talented and flexible human being, to a personality which is free of complexes.

Children who have inferiority complex would like to interact more with the younger ones and would try to run away from elder ones and even try to avoid their equals. People with superiority complex try to shun the younger ones, and would only want to relate to the older ones. They are not good communicators in either case. As parents, you can teach them communication skills. It is very important for them to learn how to communicate.

235. Gurudev, I am beginning to lose faith in you, what do I do?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: That is good. Faith is not that which can come to an end, this is the first thing.

You are trying to run away from something in your life, and you are using God or your Guru as a pretext or reason for doing so. Faith that is built in such a way surely will shake at some point of time. Every time your faith shakes, your devotion will be renewed from within once again. Truth never fails or gets shaken. True faith remains unshaken regardless of everything that happens. That which shakes is just some small belief at a very superficial level. It is your own expectations and desires, which shake you.

There was a lady who had approached me sometime earlier. She had fallen in love with a man younger than her. She told me, "Gurudev, you are God, and you can do anything. Please get me married to that man".

In this way she started questioning me. That young boy did not want to get married to her at all, and would run away at the very thought of it. I told her, "Let me ask the boy also, whether he wants to get married to you or not".

She said, "No Gurudev, he does not want to get married to me. But you can convince him and change his mind. I know you can do anything. Please use your power to influence his mind and make him agree to marry me". I told her, "There is a healthy stocky guy who came to me asking me to do the same thing for you. He wants to get married to you, so he came to me and asked me to magically change your mind and convince you to marry him. He is in love with you. Now what do I do?"

When she heard this, she said, "Oh Gurudev! I will die if I marry that other guy". I said, "That young boy is telling the same thing about marrying you!" (Laughter). I asked her, "Is this truly your faith in me, or is it just your greed and desire that is making you believe such a

thing?"

We often mistake our intense craving for our intense faith and try to manipulate the divine to fulfill our desires and get our work done. If you have faith in God only for the sake of having your desires fulfilled, then that will simply not work. Which is greater: God, or your desire? Just think about it. You want to use God like currency for transactions, and you want to do the same with your Guru. Faith and devotion are needed to help you rise higher in life and go deeper within yourself.

Difficulties and unpleasant times come in everyone's life. Is there anyone who does not have problems in their life? Lord Krishna faced so many obstacles during his lifetime. Lord Rama also faced many problems in his life. Mahatma Gandhi also faced many hurdles in his life. So difficulties come and go in life. When your faith and devotion remain intact and unshaken during those turbulent times, then you do not feel the unpleasantness of those situations. Faith becomes your anchor during these difficult times and keeps you steady.

On a completely dark night, even a flickering lamp can help you find your way and keep walking forward. But if you try to extinguish that very source of light, then it is no good. People who do this then try other ways to handle difficult situations, such as drinking alcohol, etc. Faith is a great wealth and gives you strength. Just because a few small things did not go in your favor, it does not mean that you should make your faith so fragile and delicate that it breaks every now and then.

That is why I said that it is good that you feel your faith is becoming weak and failing because something you wanted did not happen. It is alright. Eventually you will put your faith into someone or something.

236. Guruji, you have spoken about letting go. But if a person goes on making the same mistake day after day, what to do? Should I tell them, teach them, or do something about it? Please help.

Sri Sri: Yes, you should tell them, teach them, but keep them out of your mind. Letting go does not mean keeping quiet.

You know, if someone is committing a mistake and you tell them, 'Do not do this, because it hurts me', then they are never going to stop. But instead if you tell them this, 'Your making this mistake is going to hurt you', then they will not do it.

This is the difference between a teacher and a victim.

A victim says, 'I am a victim. You are a culprit so you better not do this wrong-doing'. A victim can never correct a culprit. But if you are a teacher, then you can.

What does a teacher do? He tells the other person, 'Look my dear, what you are doing will hurt you. So don't do it. I am telling you this out of love and compassion for you, so please do not make this mistake because it is going to hurt you even more'.

Then something stirs within the other person and they listen to you. They change their ways.

So just remember this, a victim can never correct a culprit and if you wish to correct somebody or teach them a lesson, you need to have that magnanimity of a teacher. You have to have compassion, a broad vision and equanimity within you.

Three things are essential, magnanimity, equanimity, and skill. Then you can digest their mistakes with ease.

See, mistakes keep happening on this planet. You cannot stop mistakes from happening. It will continue to happen, and has been happening through the ages. When you do not want a particular person to commit a mistake because you see them as a part of you, when you see them suffering and you feel that they should come out of it because it is not good for them, then you guide them out of it. Got it? You cannot say that there should not be any drainage, or that there should not be any dirty swamps in the world. Swamps do exist on the planet, but you do not want your friend or dear one to fall into it. So you should simply guide them away or out of it. That needs compassion.

How do you help someone when they have fallen in a ditch? Just by your standing there and telling them, 'Hey! Come out of that ditch', is not going to help at all. You have to give them your hand, and they should trust you that you are surely going to help them out of it before they give their hand in yours.

You can pull them out of that situation only when you can catch hold of their hand. Only then can you transform people. Just by pointing someone's mistakes to them is not going to work. You need to have that magnanimity, equanimity and that skill.

237. Two Types of Joy

"Unless you give something, you will not be satisfied. I have said that there are two types of joy. One is the joy of grabbing; another is the joy of giving. You know people get so restless. If they give something away, you will immediately feel a certain amount of peace coming inside you.

If you are caught up with any emotional turmoil or caught up with some restlessness, just do this as some sort of experiment – go to an area and give them something they need bring a little smile and joy on those people or children. Then you will see something suddenly is happening inside of you. So Daana is contributing, giving. Either you give knowledge,

something material or a few words of comfort to people. Anything you give, brings you back certain serenity and peace”.

"Our soul always looks for truth, and wherever it finds truth it resonates. Now when something feels right in your heart, just listen to it, go with it. All other conditions of the mind, philosophy, religion customs, traditions, all that you keep to one side. They have their value, I won't say you discard them away. They all have their place, but something desperate in you longs for truth, accept this without feeling any guilt. You know sometimes we feel we are not being loyal to our religion, to our teacher. This sort of conflict you should do away with. Keep it aside. No religion wants you to suffer.

Every master, saint that walked this planet they always wished elevation of the student, of the people, of mankind. So when you are finding the truth, you are finding the spiritual elevation, you are finding this spiritual enrichment, know that you have the blessings of everyone. All the prophets all the gurus all the masters, they are giving you their heartfelt blessings. You should know this for sure”.

238. I am shocked by the poverty and dirtiness in India, given the knowledge that exists here.

Sri Sri: Yes India had to learn a lot from the west and the west has to learn a lot from India. We need to exchange whatever we are doing because we are one global family. Definitely you are correct, that's why our Prime Minister, the first thing he took up is cleaning the country.

239. I do my Sadhana everyday; I still don't feel love for myself. What should I do?

Sri Sri: Who said you don't feel love. Don't be hard, don't pity yourself. You are love, my dear! You are made up of this stuff called love. Like our body is made up of amino acid, carbohydrate, protein, your spirit is made up of love, light and joy. So just wake up.

240. Women are suffering from inequality. Why it is so and what do you suggest?

Sri Sri: Women should feel empowered. They should never feel like a victim. When you feel like a victim, you lose energy, you lose enthusiasm, and you lose heart. Spiritual is where you get rid of both victim consciousness and culprit consciousness. As a victim you remain the small mind, you can never reach the Self.

As a culprit also the same thing, you come into doership, then you can't reach to the Self. So stop blaming yourself, start praising. Praising is a divine quality. So stop being a victim. Don't think that I being a lady I'm being discriminated against. Nobody can do anything if you stand up! You have all the power to stand and ascertain your rights. Of course we need to

bring a lot of change in society. But you can do that without having to feel that you are a victim.

241. I am Christian and I don't believe in rebirth but is it possible that I was born in India in a previous birth?

Sri Sri: Now you are negating your own statement! You say you don't believe in reincarnation and then you ask if you had a birth in this country. I don't know! I know for sure I have been here so many times and even you have been, whether you were an Indian or not, I don't know. Doesn't matter.

242. When you see this entire crowd that worships you, don't you have a temptation to become a living God?

Sri Sri: The way people greet in India is different and the way people greet in West and the Far East is different. In India and the Far East we bend down, we touch the feet, we bow down. This is the normal way of greeting. So this is a cultural thing, don't think that everyone has to do that. No, it is cultural. In fact, many times it's a botheration! Now people praise, give adulation, but it is all going to that one source. If someone says this beautiful, to whom does the credit go? The one who painted it. Right? So God is in everything and whenever you feel grateful, you appreciate someone, and then there is naturally an emotion that comes along with it.

In the same way, if you go to Europe you will see all the kids, their religion is soccer! In Germany in all the kids' rooms they put up posters of players. But none of this should become a matter of concern to you at all. This what we train our teachers for. It is not just me, all our teachers, wherever they are teaching, they get so much adulation, praises but they are all centered, it doesn't disturb them. In fact I say, if you have to praise someone, praise a fool. Then it is more useful. Because an intelligent person does their job, whether you praise them or not. But if you praise a fool it is of more value as he may do something!

243. Whenever I meet you I have tears in my eyes. Why?

Sri Sri: It is ok, these are sweet tears. There is a saying in the Upanishad. When you meet the one you love all the questions disappears, the heart blossoms and the tears start flowing. All the Karmas are destroyed.

244. Even with abilities I put efforts with no results whereas there are other who put little effort and no ability get the results. What is wrong?

Sri Sri: You know ask yourself – have you put your 100%? If you have put your 100% then just relax. Things will happen, when it happens. No need to compare with others. You have to compare only when it inspires you to move ahead. If the comparison is pulling you down, it is better to close your eyes and move on.

245. You have said all planets are spherical because of energy around them. How come Human Beings are not spherical?

Sri Sri: Turn around and see there are some who are very spherical!

246. Why do I have to take so many responsibilities when I have to die one day?

Sri Sri: Because you are born. When you are born you have to take care of all this. There are two ways – either you feel this is a burden and cry, make your whole life as along drawn misery. Or you take this with enthusiasm and move on with celebration. When you are tired that is when you feel that all this is too much for me to handle. I would say then Nivritti. Sit back, you have no responsibility whatsoever, close your eyes. Just relax.

Find the deepest of the rest within you. Just say one thing to yourself – I want nothing! That wanting nothing gives you the deepest of the rests. Rest is not just physical lying on the bed. It is the mode of the mind, which says I am satisfied, I am content and this contentment is not going to come by doing something or by engaging in any activity. It will come to you only through knowledge and knowledge is – everything is impermanent, I want nothing.

Children when you ask them what they want, they say I want nothing. This wanting nothing is there as a seed in every child. They only don't know everything is impermanent. So as a mature mind, even a few moments a day you say everything is impermanent, I want nothing and take a deep rest. Then you come up with energy, enthusiasm. Then you can take up a million jobs in the world, make a million people happy. Then no work appears to be significant nor insignificant.

247. You have said God is everywhere then why is their poverty and suffering. If this is their karma then doesn't God protect people with Karma?

Sri Sri: You know protection is relevant only when there is a challenge. A doctor is relevant only when there is a sickness. You have to rethink your question. How do you even know that there is protection by your side? When there is an issue, then you think 'oh there is a protection!'

248. What should be the right proportion of Satva, Rajas and Tamas in life?

Sri Sri: You focus on increasing Satva, the rest will manage themselves. You don't have to worry about that and if you are not getting sleep at all, then take a little bit of onion and garlic. That is enough to bring a little Tamas that is needed.

249. There are so many divorces happening in India. What are the tips that you would give to men and women for marriage?

Sri Sri: To the men I would say that do not hurt the emotions of the women. Emotions are most important for women. Respect women and to the women I would say don't attack a man's ego. He may be stupid but you should not call him stupid! So keep pumping his ego. He should not have to prove himself to you. Don't make him feel guilty. If you try to blame him he will run away from you. Give him comfort and to both of them, the common tip would be – don't doubt each other's love.

Don't ask each other to prove his or her love to you. If someone doubts you and keeps asking you to prove your love again and again, isn't that a burden on you? It is so difficult to express love! Nobody has been able to do it completely. Take it for granted that the other person loves you. Demand destroys love. If you feel that the love has decreased, you should ask them 'Why do you love me so much? Even if the love has dried up inside them, it will be rekindled. They will see your magnanimity; you're understanding and will start loving you more.

250. You say smile and just relax. Is it not easy for you as a Guru but tough for us humans?

Sri Sri: Anything appears to be tough when you have no energy, no enthusiasm. But if you have energy and enthusiasm, you agree to take challenges. Life is not only struggle. If life was all struggle or only problem, you would not even feel it, you would take it very easily because you get used to it. Knowledge of either comfort or trouble comes only when both are there. Knowledge happens only in opposites. Got it? So first of all take out this concept from your mind that life is only struggle. Take the positive side of life. How fortunate you have been.

Look inward and see how fortunate you have been and then look outward and see there are people who are in much worse condition than you are. Even if you look at them you feel that you are in a much better place. In life tough situations come and you definitely get help at that time. Turn back and look so many times when you thought that this is the end of the world and you got over it. So either through your confidence and faith or through your own observation and understanding or with energy and enthusiasm you can overcome.

Stop thinking life as a struggle. This is again our Sankalpa or intention. As you sow, so shall

you reap? You are putting such thoughts, so then such things get attracted to you. This is the law of karma. You encourage a particular image about yourself. You think only you have trouble? And Guruji does not have any trouble? (Laughter) Guruji has the trouble of the world on his head! One person got upset because I didn't look at him, you don't know how many demands are on me on a daily basis! You have no idea!

Don't think that your life is only struggle or that Guruji can only smile and I cannot. See now Guruji in spite of having to cater for the whole world, in spite of having so many responsibilities is still smiling. Before I tell you anything I first see I practice it. If it applies in my life only then I tell you. That is my policy. Here you will not find any thing that has not been practical in our life. So for your own sake and for God's sake don't brush aside and say this not practical, it is not practical to be happy. We are putting our own block in the mind to be happy. This is what is called the Sankalpa, intention. Intention, attention and manifestation. Everything that manifests first comes as an intention and then you put attention on it then it manifests.

251. What can we do for people who want to commit suicide?

Sri Sri: What we are doing here, we need to educate them on the spiritual path. Suppose you were oblivious to this knowledge where would you have been? How many of you feel that you can't relate to the person who you were before you did the Part 1 program, before you started meditating? (Many raise their hands) So it's necessary we need to bring this knowledge to others.

252. If someone has been physically abused as a child, is it possible to come out of the trauma?

Sri Sri: Definitely, definitely. You know, our life is like a river. There is fresh water every moment in it. Meditation is THE way to get over trauma.

253. Could you tell us if you still have an ego?

Sri Sri: I leave it to you to guess. What do you think? I'm not happy with a small ego; let it be a very big ego. The whole world is mine!

254. What is Yoga Maya?

Sri Sri: There are three kinds of Maya: Moh Maya – attachment to someone or something, Maha Maya – total ignorance and Yoga Maya. In Yoga Maya you get certain visions and voices. That's a state of Yoga. But till we are not completely empty, devoid of desires, it gets influenced by our desires. So 80% can be correct but 20% can be wrong so we shouldn't

depend on it too much. Till we are not centered in the Self, we cannot overcome Yoga Maya.

255. Once we are on the spiritual path, how do we measure our progress?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to give marks to yourself? Leave it to others. Why do you want to test yourself? Why do you want to see your own progress? Become empty. We caught up in our merits as much as we get caught up in our demerits. I have not progressed, this thought harms me and I have progressed a lot, this thought too harms you. Live like you don't exist. Become empty.

256. How to manage life when one of the most beloved people is against the foundation of your life or source of happiness?

Sri Sri: Consider it as your Tapasya, your penance. Use all your skills. You know tough situation brings out the skills in you. If things are smooth there is no use of your skill. You don't even know that you have skills. Tougher the situation, like the one that you have mentioned, it can make you about the ways of communication. How to communicate, what to do? It can bring out a lot of frustration in you and this is the challenge that you have to take.

You have many ways. Use your intellect, use all your skills of communication and finally there is something called prayer. With that intense desire, prayer for people to get transformed, they get transformed. So take it as test for your skills, your intelligence, your communication skills and the power of your prayer, your Sankalpa (intention).

257. How to move on if you are still in love?

Sri Sri: Time will take care. Wake up and see there are 7 billion on this planet. That's all! And that person did not have good luck, that's why they moved away from you, you can think that way! Move on.

258. What is the difference between innocence and foolishness?

Sri Sri: The word itself is self-explanatory. Innocence is of the heart. It's not judgmental, that is what innocence is. Don't think it is not possible to be innocent and intelligent. The foolishness of innocent people has no value. Similarly the crookedness of intelligent people has no value. The right combination is intelligence and innocence. Difference between mind and consciousness.

259. I feel very lonely. I need someone to support me whom I can rely on, but no one is ready for full commitment. What do I do?

Sri Sri: Any companionship when it goes from a place of wanting and lack, to contributing it is long lasting. You came into this world all alone. Even if you are born as twins, I tell you, you are all alone and when you from here you are going to go alone.

Don't try to run away from loneliness. It is a blessing in disguise. This is a time to be so centered. Push away everything around you. You will find that you're the scintillating energy of the Universe. You are the center of the consciousness. You're the ultimate truth. That this loneliness is only one step close to that. Loneliness is because you want to grab something from outside.

Lord Krishna in Gita has said, "Anityam Asukahm Lokam bhajaswahaam". This world is impermanent and there is no joy in it. Having attained this, look into Me, merge in Me, put your attention on me and each time you have to do this. Trying to fill your loneliness, looking for a companion, anything outside is not going to work. Know that you are on this planet to give something here and then pack up and leave. That's it!

You have come here to give something, take nothing from here. When you get into this knowledge, when you get into the fore of existence you will never feel lonely at all. You will feel the consciousness around you is all life. Then everyone is your friend here. However they behave, it is immaterial. From your side, they are your friends.

You become like a mother. The mother never minds whether the kid is crying or throwing pranks, or throwing tantrums. She doesn't mind if the baby is smiling or throwing tantrums, till she feels the baby is mine. You will feel so big, you feel that is this whole Universe is mine, everybody is mine and this is the way to get rid of loneliness. Not searching for someone who will match your mindset. It will match only for a while, because nature has made you so unique. If you see your thumbprints, each one of you has got a different thumb print. That itself shows that you are unique.

You will find a partner who is very good and after, seven or thirty or forty years, you will feel like you were never together! You wonder how they could live together for forty years and then one day say we are so different, we don't match each other! Come on, wake up! Wake up and see. Don't look for someone and something to fill your vacuum. Just we were listening to a song from Kabir, which says, 'my beloved comes to me in my dream'.

When you think this whole world is a dream, you shake hands with your beloved. Once you embrace your beloved that is it. There is no more loneliness. No more loneliness anywhere, ever. This is the spiritual path. I am not against you having a relationship, a family, getting married. No, you can have your spouse, you can have your companion, but not from the space of wanting something from them.

You can imagine a partnership where are content and you are only contributing to the other person. Such a relationship will last longer. So this way, sit and meditate, listen to bhajans, listen to songs. You're beloved is with you. You just have to look inward, that's it. Once you find your beloved within you, inside, you find him or her everywhere in this creation.

260. Is the Art of Living a sect? How do you define a sect?

Sri Sri: Well you have said sect, you should define a sect! Sect is perhaps a very closed mindset, where you feel that you are very special and others are excluded and this is true with every religion. Every religion on this planet feels that it's a special right for themselves that becomes a sect. But when you say the whole world is your family. Everyone is part of you, how can you even call it as a sect.

The Art of Living breaks all barriers of all caste, religion, and nationality. Don't you think so? Don't you think the whole world is one family? How can you call it a sect? Yes but if people insist on calling us a sect, ok then we accept that we are a sect of happy people! There are only sects in the world – sect of happy people and unhappy people. People, who are angry, upset, frustrated, agitated and unhappy. Or people who are happy, content, compassionate, loving. You can choose to be part of whichever – stress-free sect or stressed sect!

261. What do you have to say about the massacre in Paris?

Sri Sri: Ignorance. Utter ignorance! People should have freedom of expression. They can say whatever they want to say. This is an inhuman act. See on one hand you feel compassion for these people. Because on one hand these people have never had an exposure for true human values or spiritual knowledge. They are dedicated spiritually because they want to go to somewhere into heaven, they want to meet God; they want to do God's work. This is what is motivating them to do all this nonsense! If only they had exposure to this knowledge, the wisdom of meditation finding the Divinity is within us, in every one of us. Here and now. You think they would go and do all this? Never, so the onus of responsibility lies upon all of us too.

We have not made this knowledge reach the world. We have to make this knowledge reach every nook and corner of the world. Peace education is missing in the world. If every child is taught how to manage their own emotions, their own minds, the world would be a better place. You may not be able to eliminate totally, but you can reduce it to the minimum.

262. What is the exact meaning of knowledge is structured in consciousness?

Sri Sri: At different levels of consciousness knowledge is different, our understanding is different. If a child says $2+1=0$, then you will brush it aside, you will say it is impossible, you

are wrong. But if a professor of mathematics says $2+1=0$, you will wake up and see, really? How? Tell me. You will not say no that's nonsense. You will want to know how he got this. You will question your own knowledge that you learned earlier because you know this professor knows better than you. The professor says this is higher mathematics! (Laughter) and then you ask a philosopher and he will say yes perfect! When the two gets added two gets added to the One, then there is nothing more to say; even the One is not there!

"There is so much confusion about God on this planet. Life is considered to be a struggle and full of problems and that is where the Upanishads come. Tomorrow we will take it up in the morning".

"These days you can get a lot of answers from Google, Guru is not needed! What you can get from Google doesn't ask me. But there are some things that you will not get in Google, those you come to me for"

"There are five types of questions. First type of question arises when you hear about something. What you hear, you ask a question on that. You hear some scriptures, someone talking, you hear some knowledge, a question arises from some knowledge that came from outside. Second type of question, people asks just to make others feel they are present. You take it seriously and you start answering the question, they start looking somewhere else! They are really not interested in the answer, but they just want to make others feel that they are present.

The third type of question is that which arises from within you out of some deep need for it. Like you have lost the way and there are no sign boards and you find somebody on the way and you ask them how to get there. That question is something that is arising from within you out of need.

The other type of question is just arising and you are not really looking for an answer for it. Like people say 'Why do I have this issue, why do I have this problem?' you try to explain but they are not ready to listen to the answer. They reject the answer, they are happy holding on to the question. In these sort of 'Why me?' kind of questions, they are really not looking for an answer. In fact if you take away the question, they become unhappy! And then the fifth one is real inquisitiveness, scientific queries. This comes from a scientist. We learned something and now something else is happening. This inquisitiveness, curiosity to know. This question also cannot be answered by a talk, by a lecture.

The answer needs an in-depth study and till this in-depth study finishes the question keeps up again. It should come, it should haunt the person. Then they become better scientists, better astronomers, and better philosophers. One is a spiritual seekers question that is not coming out of hearing somebody's talk, or some scriptures. It is coming from inside, the innate urge to know, "Who am I?", "Who am I?" is spiritual, "What is this?", is science and they both are complementary. So before you ask a question, find out in which category you fall".

263. When to hold on to rituals and when to let go?

Sri Sri: A little bit of ritual focuses the mind, creates the atmosphere. Just imagine you are having Christmas. Suppose you don't have Christmas tree, you are not decorating it, you are not lighting the candles, and nothing at all there is any celebration!

Human beings cannot live without rituals. Whether it is secular or religious or spiritual, whatever, ritual becomes an essential part of everyone's life. Just by exchanging a ring or tying a thread around someone's neck, does not make it a marriage. But for the sanctity of the marriage we do these rituals. Somewhere in the subconscious of the mind it puts on some path, on some commitment, on some dimension. It is hard to explain.

The ancient people have some meanings with the rituals and every ritual has some significance and it does something to the environment. The rituals of the ancient people are always connected to the subtle, the subtle world. The ancient people knew the connection between the microcosm and the macrocosm and the parts of our body. It's fascinating the deeper you go into it how the microcosm and macrocosm are connected. It's so interesting.

The cosmic rays are connected to particular birds, particular grains, and particular part of your human body! So a little of ritual brings a certain flavor in human life. Yes for one who is totally centered, has total dispassion there is no need of any ritual. But for anyone who wants anything, a little bit of ritual is always recommended. Not much, just a little bit.

264. How to increase the desire for liberation?

Sri Sri: Liberation is and bondage is two sides of the same coin. What are you bound to? First find that out. Is there is a desire for liberation let it be. What is the need to increase it? If it is there then that is enough. Even the desire for liberation is bondage! Listen to Ashtavakra Gita.

265. You have said that meaning of Upanishad is to sit close to the Guru. You have also said that Guru and myself are the same. Then why do we need something to sit next to ourselves?

Sri Sri: Air is everywhere but when you sit next to the fan then you feel it. In the same way electricity is everywhere. The whole world is made up of electricity, but when the electricity passes through the wire to a bulb, only then there is light. In the same way in the presence of a Master you start blossoming. If there were no need then this question itself would not have arisen. Since the question has arisen, it means that there is a need.

266. Yudhishtir has said that one who has no debt can only be happy. Does it mean that debt is the reason of misery?

Sri Sri: Yes, debt is also a reason for misery. Debt means someone else's wealth. See, debt and compassion, you should not have either of these two in life. Be careful with this. Debt and compassion are both dangerous on the spiritual path. Do not quote this out of context! Who do you show compassion towards? If your hand is hurt, do you show compassion towards your own self? You cannot do it, you should not do it. If you don't have compassion on your own body then do you not see others as part of you? If you see others as a part of you then how can have compassion towards them?

Even the term compassion is tied with ignorance. In the same way, you consider something as debt, when you consider others to be apart from you. How can you be indebted to your own people? Are you indebted to your body? The Self realized one is neither indebted nor does he have compassion towards others. He is blissful in himself; there is no one who doesn't belong to him. That doesn't mean you will reach into someone else's purse! (Laughter). Don't misuse knowledge.

267. It is said that Bhishma, Drona and Karna knowingly fought on the side of Adharma. I too have to side with my boss at work. Then am I right?

Sri Sri: Well Bhishma had to pay for it. Yes but you will not be able to fight a war alone and especially when you have responsibility at home, you cannot stand alone against corruption and wrong doings. Even then if you feel that what is happening is very harmful stand up and say you won't do it and look for a job simultaneously. There is a limit to tolerance. You cannot do something beyond that limit. So this world is big, there are a lot opportunities, look somewhere for a job.

268. Shiva and Vishnu have temples but there are no temples for Brahma. Why is that?

Sri Sri: But the work of Brahma is over! The other two still have work left to do!

269. My son is walking on the footsteps of Lord Krishna. How do I inspire him to go Lord Rama's way?

Sri Sri: You try to explain to him, or else the police will! (Laughter)

270. How to balance between the gross and the subtle?

Sri Sri: Both have their own place. There is no need to balance. They are both on two

different dimensions.

271. How do I serve the nation when there is corruption everywhere?

Sri Sri: First change your point of view. If you feel that everywhere there are only corrupts and tyrants, then that desire to do something will die inside you. You will also get into the same flow. So first change that perception. Here there are many good people doing a lot of good work, having a Sattvic nature.

There will always be those with Tamasic nature, you have asked the question of what you can do. This question is like a road that you can walk on many times. Keep asking yourself what you can do for your country, for this world. Keep asking yourself this question and whatever answer you feel is the best; get yourself to work on that. This is what is called a volunteer.

A volunteer is not who goes around with a preconceived notion. He is available to meet the need of the moment. So what if there is corruption, you stand against it together with other youth. If you have Sattva in you, then your work gets done by the strength of the Sattva in you. Have that faith in you. Take the sankalpa (intention) through your sattvic thoughts and actions that the work needs to be done and it will happen.

272. From where does the ability to get knowledge come in us?

Sri Sri: From where did this question come? (From curiosity) And where did this curiosity come? (From sorrow) And how did sorrow come? (From desire) Where did desire come from? See where this desire came from? That is the source. The state you were in before that desire arose in you, that is the state that you return to once that desire is fulfilled. We are made up of knowledge; we are made up of bliss. So the desire to return to that, which we are made up of, arises from within us.

273. Is it necessary to move ahead in life with a philosophy?

Sri Sri: Not wanting to have a philosophy in life is also a philosophy! Whatever you say will become a philosophy. You not believing in philosophy is also a philosophy. Keep in mind some simple things - Clarity in mind, purity in heart and spontaneity in action. How do you get clarity? When the mind is not troubled by multiple desires and purity in heart. Keep your heart clean. Whatever event has happened in life, blaming someone else for that will bring bitterness in your heart. That should not happen. Save your heart. Whatever has happened to us is due to our karmas or our foolishness.

274. Why did Lord Ram leave Sita?

Sri Sri: I am neither Rama's lawyer nor Sita's. You don't bother about why He left her. You repose in yourself, in Rama. Behind every event there is knowledge. Hold on to the knowledge not the event. In the same way behind every person there is love, hold on to the love not the person and behind every object there is infinity.

The object maybe small but find out where it came from. There are some scientists who came and said that they have been studying matter for 40 years only to find out it doesn't exist! I said you are doing the right thing. This is what Shankaracharya also said, this world doesn't exist! The world of name and form doesn't exist, cannot be seen. So behind every object is infinity, behind every event is knowledge and behind every person is love. The love of infinity has come to you in the form of this person.

275. What is enlightenment? How to do you know you are enlightened?

Sri Sri: When you have a pain in your leg, how do you know you have the pain? You just know right? You don't need any external agents to know that you have a pain and that's what exactly realization is. Got it? The ultimate blossoming of human potential. Anything you do in life is for happiness and peace and realizing that you are the source of happiness, you are peace is enlightenment.

276. Importance of Makar Sankranti

"Today (Makar Sankranti) is like Thanks giving in America and Europe. Today is the festival of harvest here in India. The tradition is that you share the first harvest. The harvest when it comes home, people make a small kit of all that like sugarcane, pulses, sesame seeds, all this and they go door to door and exchange gifts and give this to everybody.

There is a proverb that says eat the sesame and the jaggery and speak and behave sweetly with everyone around you. So that's the tradition people have been following since centuries, we don't know when it started. I gave a different message for Sankranti - when you realize that you are like a sesame seed in this huge Universe, magnificent Universe, and your life becomes sweet like the jaggery. The joy that is there in being egoless is not there in being egotistic.

The one without ego lives in bliss. An egotist lives in fear, doubt, this is what ego is made up of – fear, doubt, and separateness and judgments, criticizing others, and all this is part of ego. When you are natural, when you are at home with everything around you, then there is more sweetness in life.

The egotistic attitude constrains you, because there is doubt, there is fear, there is

separateness, saying I am different, I am separate, all judgments come in about other people, all these things come as a by-product of an egotistic personality. If the personality is child-like, innocent, blossomed, then you feel at home with everything. You don't sit and keep judging right wrong, he is this way she is that way this sort of judgmental attitude constrains your happiness, your joy. So that's the message. Innocence has got more sweetness and beauty in life than crookedness".

277. Every age sees a wave of Dharma followed by Adharma. Is this part of God's plan?

Sri Sri: Looks like that! In nature everything has a place and has a time, it will come and go and everything has something to do with it. You can't say it just it is just Karma, Dharma is also there. Dharma is our duty and Karma is what is happening. Life cannot be taken fatalistically. Life is combination of free will and destiny. Make your will strong and smile at the destiny and take it as an opportunity. Destiny poses opportunity and self-effort brings you success.

278. Artists are often atheists. How can someone who is so creative not appreciate the Divine?

Sri Sri: You can't say that. Everyone in some way or another, in some manner, in some style or another, appreciates. Only the expressions are different.

279. Buddha said becomes answerless. How to become answerless?

Sri Sri: When a question mark becomes straight it becomes an exclamation mark! Wow! You see whenever you question anything; the question in it is connected with misery. People always ask, 'Why do I have this misery?' Nobody asks, 'Why do I have this happiness?' I think in our cerebral cortex, a question somewhere is close to where the sadness, sorrow is also there. Not the same, but somewhere closes to that. Looks like that! And wonder is to be associated with happiness.

When you are happy, you wonder! 'Oh! I wonder what this is!' That is also a question. Wonder is also a question but not expecting an answer. That seems to be somewhere associated with joy. Is not wonder associated with joy most of the time? There may be exceptions for this also. In the Universe u can never say 'Definitely, it is like this!'. There is always a chance for something different. Usually sun rises in the east and sets in the west but if you go to the North Pole it is not the case. It doesn't rise; it just goes round the corner.

280. You say that I am eternal. There is no way to verify it. How can I really experience it?

Sri Sri: Ok let's see it this way. Do you know you are the same person who has been here on

this planet ten, fifteen, twenty years ago? Take your album and look at all your pictures. How your appearance has changed! Just take your mind back and see your thought process. What were you thinking then and now? It's changed. How your emotions have undergone a big change. Have you ever thought about it? Have you ever felt that you have not changed but everybody else has changed?

You ask any aged person, he feels that he has not aged but everybody else has aged. Especially people between fifty and sixty, they feel that their kids have grown up but they have not changed! If you are not yet fifty, wait for that (Laughter). Suddenly you will feel that you have not changed. Especially if you are a lady and someone asks you what is your age and you have crossed fifty, they get mad at you! They don't feel that they have aged.

So there is something in you that say that I have not aged, or that I am not going to die. That is good enough to understand and then when you go deep in meditation or do Eternity Process, you see the past, that you have been here many times and the last option also to know that you are eternal is to let go of all cravings and all aversions, all wants. Then you have nothing more that you want, then this awareness comes that 'I am eternal'. It's Catch 22 – if this awareness comes then you want nothing anyway! You don't want anything because you know that you are eternal.

281. We have heard in the Puranas, that Gods also curse people. But how come the Divine curse people when you say that God is love?

Sri Sri: You know it's not Gods, its Angels. There is one level below Gods - It is Angels. The Angels do have their wants and preferences. So they sometimes can curse, though I don't give it so much importance to it. Even if the Angels it is only a blessing, they say. In the Puranas you may have heard even the Sages curse somebody. But even the curse of a Sage or an enlightened person, even though it doesn't happen, but they put it as a clause, that even if that possibility is there, even a mistake by a Rishi, is only beneficial for the universe.

A benevolent act of an ignorant can also be harmful. The anger of the enlightened can also be beneficial. I think I have said somewhere in the past also. There are ample examples. A mistake that Vyasa did, Suka came into existence. Like that what you see is that what was considered in the localized perspective as wrong, on a larger perspective became beneficial. So don't worry, no God is going to curse you and even if they curse something good will come out of it, it is like a boon.

282. What impels people to be violent in the name of religion?

Sri Sri: Wrong understanding, lack of spiritual experience, concept that by being violent you can achieve something in heaven. It's so unfortunate. That's why an empty lectures and philosophies without the depth of spirituality, without the juice of spirituality is causing

damage to the world. It is a fact.

283. Can contentment be a conscious practice? If yes, then how?

Sri Sri: Yes, because discontentment is an unconscious act. Discontentment is an unconscious impact. Their needs to be a cause for discontentment and the cause for discontentment can be overcome when you become conscious. That's what knowledge is all about. Knowledge takes away the darkness of discontentment.

284. It is said that even Avatars go through chaos. Is it the case of opposite values being complementary?

Sri Sri: Yes opposite values are complementary. But it is not necessary that they have to go through chaos. There was no chaos in Vamana Avatar. There was chaos in the lives of Parashuram, Sri Rama; Sri Krishna caused chaos in other's lives! Buddha went through chaos in his personal life, not otherwise. Understand that you are not any less than an Avatar. That is how I see it. I can show you fault in any Avatar! Don't keep focusing on their faults. Learn from them. Learn playfulness from Krishna, dignity from Rama and silence from Buddha. Then go inside yourself and relax.

There is nothing that is not inside us, that they had. What they had in them is what we have inside us too! God is in every atom of our existence. Sun does not shine more through one window than another. Wherever a window is opened, it shines equally there. But you have to open the window, draw aside the curtains. If it's a glass window, you have to clean it and if it's a wooden window you have to open it. But you have to open it! That is what the purpose of all this Sadhana and Satsang.

285. Gurudev, Please tell me how to keep my connection with the divine in my everyday life, and in times of distress.

Sri Sri: This intention to keep the connection itself indicates that you keep feeling the connection again and again. Just make it a habit. As soon as you wake up, feel the connection. Before going to bed, thank the divine for all that you have received. Even this, you do not need to repeat it verbally, you should simply take it for granted and be natural.

Divinity is the simplest form of awareness. Divinity is our most natural state. Any moment, in which you feel totally at ease and at home, know that you are in divinity. That is it. One of the biggest requirements is total contentment. When you feel totally contented, that moment you are with the divine and that is the time when you are in the moment, in the 'now', because 'now' means 'total contentment'.

'Now' is for 'total contentment' and 'tomorrow' is for 'desires, planning and wanting'. So be here and now, in total contentment and total serenity. How often-total contentment and total serenity comes up in you, is up to you. Sometimes it just happens to you. That is why many saints in the past have said that it is a gift that they have received.

286. If someone loves you so much that it comes in the way of Sadhana, then what can one do?

Sri Sri: That's not love that is entanglement. Entanglement always creates blocks. Turn the entanglement into love. Love means, 'I don't want anything, I am here for you'. This is love.

287. Frustration

"The day to day events in society, in world, you get so many chances to get frustrated. Why? And now when such incidents happen, what happens, what can we do. Our frustration is because something or the other will come up to be frustrated. You want perfection and the perfection is not available so you get frustrated.

You want someone to do things on time, they don't do it, and so you get frustrated. You want things to be done the way that you want it to be, if it doesn't happen, you get frustrated. Right? So just turn back and look in your own life how many instances have occurred in your life where you have got frustrated. Can you even count? Sometimes you feel it's not in your hand or it's not in your capacity to do. From small things to big things.

Now one of the biggest problems in the world is ISIS many countries are frustrated. If that is too far away, see in this road, Kanakpura road, and our local problem. We have given two garbage-collecting vans for the Panchayat here to collect the garbage and keep the place clean and everyday when you drive you see how the garbage is spread on both sides of the road and our volunteers have gone there, collected the garbage, out it in the garbage bin and we educated the people, please don't dump the waste on the road. Two days it will be fine, third day it again starts and from the autos they throw the garbage and the cows go eat it and when you see cows eating it you get frustrated.

You come to even a more local problem. You teach Sadhana to people, teach meditation to people, they don't do it and then they say, I am depressed! Someone says I have pain, okay you give them medicine, and they take the medicine but don't have it. You ask the doctors, doctors all over the world have this problem. Patients come they receive the medicine but don't take it, they put it under the pillow or somewhere and they complain, nothing happens.

It's not that the medicine didn't work, you never followed upon the medicine, and you never took the medicine. Then how much the doctors get frustrated! Because in this country everyone behaves as though they are doctors (laughter) and if you keep looking like this,

you will find one hundred and one reasons to get frustrated. We have some very talented people but they have certain minus points. If you look at their minus points, their talents are gone.

So you don't see a very perfect person, but your intention is to see everyone as perfect. When you are looking for perfection in everyone around, I tell you, you forget to look for the imperfection inside of you. We want everybody else to be perfect. Are you in that perfection? You have to look for that. When you see that you are imperfect, then you will stop pointing out and get frustrated about other's imperfection. If we are frustrated about other's imperfection, we cannot contribute to their growth, them becoming perfect. This is our dilemma.

We want others to be perfect, organizations to be perfect, nations to be perfect, people to be perfect and in this run we forget to see how we can improve ourself. Right? So we when we start looking within a whole new dimension open in front of us. Then you are able to educate people without getting frustrated. Then you become a good teacher, a good leader. If a leader is frustrated, what will happen? You have to correct them, whatever raw material you got in your hand; you have to manage with that. Whatever talents you have, you have to build up on them.

Everybody has some flaws, and everybody has some very good points as also. If you see only flaws, you will miss out on the plus points. Overnight nobody becomes perfect, so gradually people start becoming perfect and we need to encourage them to become perfect. So this is a management science. How to manage yourself, your mind and how to manage your environment, how to see that the frustrations doesn't seep inside of you. Or else for something or the other reason, the frustration is just waiting there, it will just seep into you and once it takes charge of you, I tell you, you become useless. You become really useless!

Many times when people are complaining you can see that there is so much frustration in them and they don't do anything. People who are complain simply complain, they don't do work and people who work, they have nothing to complain about. They know things are this way! Those who don't work they see flaws everywhere. They see flaw in this person and that person. They see flaw in the smallest of things. They never think, if there is a flaw, let it be, so what. Is someone is abusing you, let them; see that there is some good in them too.

You cannot be a Guru to everybody. If your Guru only can't do it, then how will you do anything about it! Guru gives time to such people, sees that the person is a child, waits for the maturity to come in, has patience. Else the Guru too will get frustrated. In no situation should frustration find a place inside us, in our mind, this you should take care of.

When we get frustrated even with small things, we get filled with stress in us. It happens gradually in our minds with things like that person got to sit in the front and I am sitting behind, to play Holi he went first, I had to come in a queue! In these way things, which are not of much consequence gradually, it becomes a thorn and pricks us inside. Because have

so much expectation from others and we forget about ourselves!

First see what you done. What has been your contribution to the world? You came to this world and what have you done since? How have you been useful to others? If we focus on these questions then we will not waste our time in finding fault in others. You keep finding fault in others and say Guruji, you set everyone right! Does Guruji not know whom to set right? They give me a lecture! I tell them, first you set yourself straight. Look inside you. This is the way the world is; where there is a rose, there will also be thorns. This is the norm of the world. Even if there is no thorn we imagine it is there. This mind of ours is very intriguing. That's why it is called maya. Don't get caught up in maya.

Someone asked a saint, why is this world full of sorrow. Sometimes you get sorrow from your son, or daughter or wife. If they are ok then the neighbours trouble you. If the neighbours are ok then the dogs on the street bark all night and trouble you! If there is no trouble in life then also one is not content. They go and stick their nose in other people's trouble!

That's why it is said that maya has very long hands, it pulls everyone in. So this is maya, having frustration and stress in the mind for no reason at all. Even in the best of places one can be unhappy and if we have made a habit of being frustrated, then no one can save us. You can only be saved through self-effort; only through knowledge can you get out of it.

If you live in society then praise and criticism will both come your way. Suppose you are working in a company, you want your boss to behave in a way that is convenient for you and you want perfection in your boss. Suppose your boss taunts you three or four times, then you label him, this man is hopeless and you start behaving like that with him or her. Your perception puts you in a reactive mode.

When you correct your perception, when you understand this all maya, there is imperfection in the world and people have a right to be imperfect and you have no business to correct them. They have not asked you to develop them or correct them. You better see it this way, this is how the world is, and it's maya. That's why they say this world is maya. That's how it is, things are like that. When you say things are like that, people are like that; suddenly you find a witness consciousness dawning inside of you. That makes you so centered and stable and you know how things should go, when it should go, where it should go.

This doesn't mean you should not point out the mistakes and just accept everything and let everything happen saying this is all maya, let things happen the way it is happening, God will handle it! No. When I saw there is garbage on the road, I immediately called to ensure it gets picked up immediately. So you have to keep doing this again and again. You should keep acting but without getting into frustration. This is the secret.

It's very easy to wash your hand and sit in a corner, and don't have anything to do, let things run the way they are running and it is very easy to get frustrated and keep complaining. But

the finest path is taking action without frustration. Frustration is like somebody just waiting to run into your home and you have guard it and keep them out. Frustration is waiting in many corners, just finding a way to enter your home, through ventilator or through chimney or through door, anywhere! And you have to guard all your entrances from frustration.

If nothing else you can get frustrated with yourself. You not only get frustrated with others but we also get frustrated with ourself! We get dissatisfied with oneself. We lose our intelligence when we get dissatisfied. We get dissatisfied with the smallest of things. So we have to maintain or contentedness. This is a *niyama* (principle), in the *Yoga Sutras*. These are the five *niyamas*, 'shauch', cleanliness, 'santosh', contentment, and happiness.

Don't let frustration creep into your system, your home, yourself. Then brain functions better, your intellect functions better. You get ideas on how to handle situations. So got it? Neither get frustrated about people and situations around you nor get frustrated with yourself because you are repeating the same mistakes again and again. Neither of this will help and this is a very delicate balance to keep the spirit alive in you, enthusiasm alive in you, without letting frustration inside you and acting where it is needed.

288. Guruji, what is your message?

Sri Sri: I have no message. In order to give a message you have to be far away. Message needs a distance. Message is of the past or of the future. Message is impersonal and lifeless. Knowledge cannot be a message.

The wise one will not give you a message, but will simply awaken you. God will not give you a message. For God to give you a message, God has to be so far away from you. God is more close to you than your breath. How can He give you a message?

The wise neither need a message nor give a message. The unwise would give a message and want a message - and would be unable to use the message anyway. Whoever needs the message will not use it and one who can use the message wouldn't need it!

Jim asks, "What is the difference between Knowledge and message?"

You can read about living in the moment so many times, but it only becomes knowledge when you experience it. Like you can read the ingredients, but when you taste it, the information becomes Knowledge.

Jim says, "These Knowledge sheets really cut down on our communication". (Laughter)!

289. What is love? Why is it that some people have it and some people don't?

Sri Sri: If you think some people don't have love, then you are not seeing properly. They do have love. There is not an inch of space on this planet that is devoid of love; either it is misplaced or it is shrouded in ignorance. That's it.

290. It is said that one glimpse of Guru and all your Karmas are burnt away. I have had many glimpses of you but still little karma is creating havoc (Laugh). Have I started to look it from a new eye? (Laugh)

Sri Sri: This is what Krishna said in Gita. That which you call as Karma is which is unpleasant to you. When you are happy you don't consider it as Karma but when you are unhappy, you say this is my Karma. You need an eye of knowledge there. Then you will see that everything happening in life is having purpose. Lack of wisdom (aviveka) creates problems.

When you are awake then problem will come, you will act and it will go. Suppose you walking if your chappal breaks, you don't say it's my Karma but if your car breaks then you say "Ohh it's my Karma". Because you haven't seen things from bigger perspective. Karma is part of world and it will continue till you are here. There is no escaping from it.

291. How can I become Bhakt Prahlad, will it happen or do I have to put any effort?

Sri Sri: It's like asking Gurudev, How I can like mangoes! It just comes from within. The very desire that you want to be like Bhakt Prahlad, you are already on your way. "Ahlad" means happiness. "Prahlad" means bliss and bliss will always go towards "Narayan". For that courage needs to be there. Narasimha means courage like lion.

292. How can we make our kids spiritually strong?

Sri Sri: Kids are naturally spiritual. Just keep them away from bad habits like smoking, drinking, and from violent activities and violent games, etc. If you do this, then they will naturally be spiritual.

293. You are our role model.

Sri Sri: But I model all your roles!

294. Satsang Transcript

Our daily diet is mostly acidic in nature due to which we feel lousy and we get joint pains. Hence we need alkaline in blood. Have alkaline water everyday. To prepare it, In 1 litre water put 4 pieces of cucumber and a few drops of lemon. Two to Three hours after food have this alkaline water. This will neutralize your food should be properly digested. Include more raw food in diet.

295. What should be the role of media?

Sri Sri: Tell the facts. However, know that many, many people are stressed and tired. The role of media is therefore not just to dish out facts but also to inspire and give hope.

One person's success or mistake can become an inspiration or a lesson for millions through sensitive reporting by the media.

If the overwhelming majority of what is shown by media is bad news, then it will mess up the psyche of the viewers. Media needs to be responsible for this.

296. Please talk about how to be always happy.

Sri Sri: If you let go of always then you will be happy!

297. Is the entertainment industry spoiling the minds of people?

Sri Sri: I don't watch it so I don't know! You will know better. Our job is to better the minds of people which we are doing and you should also join in the work of bringing the hearts and minds of people together, bringing joy and enthusiasm in everybody. This is what we do.

298. What can be the role of media in making the world a better place?

Sri Sri: There is a great role for media to play. Media connects people all over the world. You get to know what is happening around the world. It is the responsibility of Media to make people aware of the consequences of wrong actions. When we know this then our field of experience expands. Our experience broadens. The experience of one person does not remain confined to that person; the collective experience becomes the experience of one person. It is possible through Media only.

The message from the lives of lakhs and crores of people starts coming through to you. When the Media informs us that someone did something wrong and is suffering for it, then

we will not indulge in the same activities. At least we should not, that is the sign of intelligence and when you are informed of the world's scientific and cultural spheres, society's problems then you get such a growth in life. When you get to know about the various areas like societal, political, scientific, spiritual etc, then you get a certain depth, expansion in life.

299. Is sacrifice and compromise necessary in true love?

Sri Sri: Sacrifice is essential everywhere. Anything big you want to achieve, sacrifice is essential.

300. Do hell and heaven really exist?

Sri Sri: Well let's see how we can rid of the hell here. We create hell and heaven in our own mind. Afterwards where we go we will cross that bridge when we come to it. Let's see how we can create a harmonious atmosphere. What is heaven? Where there is harmony, where there is peace, where there is happiness. That's heaven right? Hell is the lack of all this.

301. How to identify that I am near enlightenment? What are the symptoms?

Sri Sri: Don't worry, it will become like a pain in your neck. It will become so obvious. When you have a headache then you don't go and ask somebody, do I have a headache? No. It becomes so obvious to you.

302. How to bring it to my experience that joy doesn't lie in the object?

Sri Sri: First you heard and then understood it intellectually and then you see it keeps coming in your life. With time and maturity one day you will suddenly feel, oh yes, there is nothing much in this. What you thought is giving you a lot of joy one day you will say its ok. Go by your experience.

303. Will discussions and dialogues give a solution to terror groups?

Sri Sri: I think we must keep making an effort to stretch our hand for dialogue with these people. Whether it will give result or not that judgment is too soon, before you even act in that direction.

304. What is the correct way to make a Guru?

Sri Sri: This is matter of feeling. You cannot make someone your Guru. You just accept someone as your Guru. Whatever we make is always smaller than us. You only recognize your Guru and you recognize when you become a seeker.

305. You said that the disciple should kill the mind and follow the Guru, but I'm not able to do so.

Sri Sri: If you cannot kill the mind then nature will! Mind is desires. Nature observes all the desires that you carry, you hold them tight, but when we are happy irrespective of our desires getting fulfilled or not then we can say that we have killed the mind. Suppose you go to the movies but you didn't get tickets as it was house full, then do you feel angry, sad or do you say never mind and move on? You didn't get tickets to a movie then let's go to a temple or attend a satsang, and then you will know that you have killed your mind! Keep the faith that whatever is best for you will always happen, nature who has brought me up will also take care of me. But you should apply this knowledge only when you give your hundred percent.

Often when we have to do something wrong we, we say we have to do it. But when we have to do something good, we say it will happen if God wants it to. Like a lot of people tell me that I will come to Ashram when you call me! We leave it to destiny when it comes to doing something good but when we have to fulfill some desire then we put in our all.

We have to reverse this. What we are receiving is because of our past karmas, which we will anyways get. But we have to think about our future actions, what I have to do in life. That we have to do, not bothering about the result of the action. When we do that then automatically we starting getting fulfillment.

306. Will spirituality in work place diminish dynamism and aspirations and bring about complacency?

Sri Sri: Absolutely not. Complacency is not spirituality. Neither peace neither means complacence nor does stress mean creativity. If stress means creativity then Afghanistan should have been the most creative part of the world! Last four decades it's been under so much stress. I don't think anything creative has come out of Afghanistan or any of the troubled places in the world. Inner peace or spirituality does not support complacence. Inner peace supports dynamism.

When you are happy, you want to do something more. When you are enthusiastic you want to do something better. What does spirituality give you in life? Number one, it develops your intuitive ability. Don't you need intuition in doing any work? It gives you energy. Don't you need energy? It inspires you to do something.

What is the point of having education and no inspiration? It is good for nothing! If you are a highly educated person and you are not inspired, you are good for nothing. So this something that spirituality brings you inspires you to do something and fourth, it gives you confidence. If you don't want confidence, intelligence, intuition, inspiration, stay away from spirituality and if you remove these four things from the work place you know how the work place becomes, like the government offices. Some government offices, not all!

307. What happens when one works with a certain set of values but a company does not?

Sri Sri: Either you change the company or the company will change you that are it.

308. Are you worried?

Expand your vision about yourself, about life and about this universe. This universe has been there for at least 19 billion years, and it is part of a billion of galaxies. If you observe the cosmos, the solar system is like a dot.

There are billions of galaxies and one among them is our Milky Way. So the Milky Way is very small, and in that, the solar system is a dot, and in that there is our planet Earth, and in that there is you! You have to take a lens to see and by the time you see, you're already gone! (here meaning, the magnanimity of the universe in comparison with our existence).

What is your life? In this multi-verse, your planet is insignificant and you are even more insignificant. Another factor is time. In so many billions of years, billions of people have walked this planet. There are seven billion people on this planet today, and many are being born every day and many are dying. Then what is your life? It's like a blink of the eye, and you're already gone! When you see your life from this bigger context, you realize that it is nothing!

80 years you live on this planet called Earth. Out of that, 40 years you spend sleeping, 10 years you spend in the bathroom, 10 years you spend in eating, 15 years you spend in working. The waking period in your life is so small.

What is this 'me, me me?' It is nothing! Think and you will realize that life is insignificant.

Everyday billions of thoughts come into your brain and then they go. You hold on to some thoughts. You can't hold on to all the thoughts. If you hold on to all the thoughts you will be in the mental hospital!

When you see life from a bigger context all the worries disappear and a new dimension opens up.

Now when you go into the microcosm, it is even more exciting. There are billions of cells in the brain and many are being born every day and many are dying. There are 50,000 types of bacteria in your stomach. There are 3 different colonies of mites that live on each line on your forehead. They have their colonies; they don't cross their lines.

In India, people would put three lines of ash across their forehead, I used to wonder why, but now scientists say that those three lines have colonies of mites and they all are very different.

Similarly, on the tip of the nose there are so many types of bacteria! Scientists are still baffled! The information got from the tip of the nose is even more than what they can get from the DNA. Scientists still haven't understood how much information the tip of the nose can provide. When you go deeper and deeper into the microcosm there is so much! It is baffling!

You take one atom, the space there is like that between the galaxies. An atom is 99.99% empty space! The same is the case of the cells in our body. The cells in our body are just empty space.

Whether you take the route of science or that of spirituality, you will reach the same point. Both say the same thing, that it is all space. It is very interesting.

Recently there was an article published by the American Medical Journal, which said that if a person meditates regularly for 8 weeks, the structure of the brain changes and the grey matter increases. So many benefits come out of meditation.

Just learning about genes is fascinating! Do you know that in one human gene you can find all other genes? Every other animal is present in one human gene! You can create an elephant using one atom from your body. The human body is so complete that from it you can create every other gene. This is all so fascinating.

When such things are there, what is there to worry?

309. Why are people so crazy?

Sri Sri: If you think people are crazy, are you one of them? If you think you are not one of them, someone else might think that you are crazy!

In this world there is all types of craziness. If an alien comes to this planet and goes to a soccer stadium, he would find it to be an absolutely crazy place! He will not be able to understand why the 11 players are chasing one ball and are trying to get the ball into the net, and why are there 11 others on the other side stopping them, that too for one little ball. He would say, 'Why are they all fighting over a ball?'

An alien would say, 'Let me give 22 balls to 22 players. Let them kick their balls and keep them in the net!'

If their goal is to put the ball in the net, he would say, 'Okay, let us all go and keep it there'. He will fail to understand why people are kicking the ball and falling over each other and 50,000 people around are clapping and crying and howling! It sounds absolutely crazy!

Like that there are many such crazy things in the world. I used to find English language very crazy. You write, 'know' and pronounce it as 'no'. I would say, 'know!' (Pronouncing it with the k sound) You should speak the way you write and read. You write 'knowledge' and put a 'k', I would say, 'knowledge' (pronouncing with the k sound). Everyone found it absolutely crazy. My mother tongue is such that the way we write is the same as what we speak. In English, several letters become silent and you don't know which is silent and which is not silent. It was so difficult.

Like that there are different crazes in the world. Everything is a craze and people are crazy for different things. Some are crazy about games, some for politics, and some for money.

Do you know what happened in China? On New Years, in Shanghai, somebody threw fake currency from the top of a tower and 35 people died in a stampede. Is this not crazy? People going to get free money falling from some building onto the street? There is no limit for being crazy. At least here it is good crazy!

Some people are crazy about meditation and some are crazy about singing. It is okay! Here in Art of Living you can find a variety of craziness! (Audience laughs) We are not homogeneous. All types of specimens of the world are in here. If you want to find all types of crazy people in one place, you are in the right place!

We have always said, 'Accept people as they are'. Sometimes I wonder, 'Why did I put this point! I have been trapped by it!' I have never said anything in my life which I have not practiced, so since I have said this, I have to practice it and I have been practicing, carrying on and accepting all sorts of craziness. I tell you, there is hope! I am still happy!

310. I have a very nice person as my partner. I feel that I am not good enough for my partner and I am not fulfilling the expectations kept from me. Is marriage really made in heaven? Am I being cursed with love?

Sri Sri: You are wondering why you got married! It's a little too late for that! It is better not to spend time regretting. Marriage is a compromise and you have to compromise. You know you have a very nice person as a partner. Just imagine what you would have done if you had had a very bad person as a partner. Now either you put the label on your partner that he or she is a bad person, or you put the label on yourself, it's the same. If you put the label on yourself you are justifying your action by saying, 'Anyways I'm a bad person so I will keep

doing what I'm doing, I don't need to change'.

If you put the label 'bad' on your partner, you think he will never change. In either case it's not going to work. I once read a small story. After death a gentleman was departing and his dog came along with him. When they got to the gate marked 'Heaven', the guard said, 'Only you can come in, you cannot bring your pet in. Your dog is not allowed'. The man said, 'The dog has been so loyal to me, how can I leave him'. The guard said, 'In heaven dogs have no entry'. The man felt committed to the dog so he didn't enter heaven and went further. Then they came to a gate with a board saying 'Hell' where they welcomed him. He asked if he could bring his dog with him and they said yes.

He went in and the place was really heaven. He thought if this is heaven then what was that other gate? He was told that was hell! It was only to test and filter people to see whether they give up their commitment and not care for others, or they care for those who they are committed to. 'That is real hell and this is heaven. You have kept your commitment and so you are here'.

Do not think you are a bad person, change yourself. Why can't you change yourself? Give up little things for the sake of your partner. I am not telling you to give up all the time, but at least sometimes. Then you will not label yourself as a bad person. If sometimes without your own knowledge some words come out of your mouth, or if you behave differently, don't sit and regret. Just see it's a dream and move forward. That's why you should live in the moment with commitment, not just live in the moment.

311. Guruji, how to teach meditation to special children?

Sri Sri: They don't need it. They have come to take Seva from you. They have not come to learn but to teach. Special children teach you patience, perseverance, compassion and the art of giving.

312. Dear Gurudev, is being greedy for the Guru good?

Sri Sri: Well, you can be greedy to do seva, and to get higher knowledge. No need to be jealous of others near the Guru. Guru keeps all kinds of people around him or her. He keeps some people closest so that they don't cause problems to others. Some are very thick skinned, and some are sensitive. Ashrams are like a zoo. It is not homogenous type of people.

In our ashram also, there is a whole zoo. At the entrance, there are monkeys, and then there are a whole lot of squirrels, snakes, and mongoose. At the back there are geese, swans, and plenty of birds. There are around 100 varieties of birds and 200 varieties of butterflies. There are deer, horses, rabbits, turtles, and cows; there is an elephant, and if there are some

animals missing, there are people who behave like them. They pounce like lions and tigers. We have a miniature zoo here. But it's very interesting and everyone is happy. That is the thing.

313. Is there a scientific explanation for the materializations of vibhuti and other small objects such as rings, necklaces by many saints?

Sri Sri: No, even they say don't give much importance to it. It is nothing. It is just a technique. There are many such vidyas (techniques) to do those things. You don't have to be enlightened to do those things. What is much more important than bringing a ring from there to here is bringing a change in the mind, and a change in one's life. That is important.

314. Dear Gurudev, I don't speak out my problems to you knowing that you already know what is going on in my mind. I read a book where you said that a devotee must speak out his or her mind to the master without any hesitation regardless of how trivial the matter might be. Does this mean that I should be more vocal than I am at the moment or do silent prayers have effect?

Sri Sri: As long as the things are happening and you don't feel like verbalizing it, it's fine. There is no need that you must say it out, but many times when you say it out, you feel lighter from the inside. That is why I say speak out. You don't need to hesitate.

315. Dear Gurudev, when it comes to parenting, what is the difference between responsibility and attachment or bondage?

Sri Sri: When it comes to children, it is a sacred responsibility. Our responsibility is not just providing food, shelter and education. We should see that their mentality, emotions, intellect, thoughts and behavior are on the right track. This is necessary.

316. What are your plans for the future?

Sri Sri: To make everyone live in the present!

317. How to act passionately after being trained to be dispassionate?

Sri Sri: You cannot create passion, when you love something it simply comes to you. You cannot ask me how do I love something; there is no way, no method.

Sometimes repetition might create an attachment but I wouldn't say it is love. I have seen

people who are fighting and when one person is not there anymore or has gone far away then one feels some sort of vacuum suddenly. Every day you are fighting with someone and suddenly that person is not there, what to do now? This is a sort of attachment, but passion that is something which cannot be cultivated, it just comes to you. Dispassion can be cultivated to some extent but compassion and passion cannot be cultivated.

318. Science

Do you know, Buddha means the enlightened, and also the super intelligent?

Buddhi in Sanskrit means intelligence. Buddha is one who has a matured intellect, and science is all about intelligence. Logical understanding of 'what is' step by step is science. In the East and Far East, we have always encouraged science. From centuries not even one scientist has been persecuted here. So encouraging logical understanding, and experimenting is what science is and science and spirituality are never in conflict with each other, they always complement each other.

'What is this?' is science, and 'Who am I' is spirituality. Analyzing the object is science, and analyzing the subject is spirituality and the study of object and subject is never contradictory. At least not in the east.

319. When death is the ultimate truth of life, then why does one take the guidance of astrology?

Sri Sri: Are you asking this for yourself or for somebody else? If you are asking for yourself then just become aware that all of us are going to die, for sure. The important thing is that while we live, we shall be happy and have fun in all that we do.

While man is alive, he usually gets entangled in thinking, 'Oh, what will happen to me? What if there are some difficulties tomorrow? How will I be happy?'

This urges him to acquire wealth for a sense of security. The main aim of life is to be happy and comfortable with what we have, but often the path one takes brings misery instead of happiness. This is utter foolishness.

So what does an intelligent person do? An intelligent person knows for sure that God is with them; God loves them and belongs to them, so they don't need to worry about anything. This feeling of deep faith gives them confidence. This is the secret of confidence. So they are able to do and achieve what they want.

See, if you are in the driving seat then you can turn the car in whichever direction you want, and spirituality gives you that strength to go where you want to. There is a saying, 'Ram jharoke baith sabka mujra le' (Meaning: Repose in the faith of the Divine and see everything

as a passing event). So when the connection with the Divine happens, no matter where you are, you can achieve and get what you wish for. Whatever blessing you give starts to manifest. This is the great wealth of spiritual knowledge.

We have such great knowledge with us in this country but many people are not even aware of it. People go to the temple, just break a coconut, give money to the priest to perform Aarti (act of rotating the sacred lamp before the deity) and keep wondering on how to improve their life. They come back home and get stuck again in craving and aversion, criticizing others, belittling others, and getting entangled in feelings of jealousy and greed. They spend their whole life like that.

To improve your life you should find joy in spirituality. Once you find this joy, do not run away from your family responsibilities; stay at home and attend to your family responsibilities also. Balance both so that your spiritual life as well as your family life improves. This is such beautiful knowledge and this is what we must practice also.

320. How to combine our inner journey and the outer world events?

Sri Sri: Inner journey and outer world events are complementary. If you are happy inside, you are able to work dynamically outside. The more dynamic you are, deeper and better is the rest and meditation. When you meditate the joy increases.

People who are lazy, they cannot be happy and people who are dynamic, it is not necessary that they will be happy also. Dynamism should be combined with inner silence. So, time-to-time, one should take a few days off, learn how to go deep inside and meditate.

321. Astonishing and Mysterious Karma!

What do we get upset with? We don't get upset with the birds, or the clouds, or with Nature. We don't get upset with the environment. So, what do we get upset with?

We get upset with the people around us. Our enemies upset us and our friends upset us as well. Our mind gets stuck either in our friends or in our enemies. We either think about our friends or we think about our enemies the entire day.

People become our enemies even when we have not done any wrong to them. Many people have had this experience. We didn't do any wrong to them; neither did we misbehave and still they became our enemies. This is very surprising!

We think, 'Oh! Why has he become my enemy? Until yesterday he was my friend'. In the same way, we do not do any special favors for some people, yet they become our close friends.

That is why I tell you, this is some astonishing and mysterious Karma – how some people become our enemies and some our friends.

So what should we do?

We should place both our friends and enemies in one basket, and just become empty from within and be joyful.

All these happenings (people becoming friends and enemies) are run by some law and we don't know how and where it comes from. We just can't say when someone's feelings towards us will change and whether it will be in our favor or not in our favor. We just can't say. That is why we should place absolute faith on our Self, on God, and not on friendship and enmity.

We should not waste our time thinking about friends and enemies.

What do you all think?

This does not mean you distance yourself from your friends, or that you stop making new friends. That is not what I am saying. Friendliness should be in our nature; love should be in our very nature. We are love after all!

When someone comes and sits beside us, we do smile at them and exchange a few words. This does not mean you think, 'Anyways, who is a friend or who is an enemy, there is nothing to share with anyone', and you walk around with a gloomy face being angry with everyone – this is not a sign of wisdom. This is ignorance and foolishness.

We must interact with everyone around us but at the same time be centred from within. Do you understand?

When we are centred, then we will not feel sad, angry or possessive. Then we will not have disappointment of any kind. Otherwise many times what happens, we become sad – 'Oh! Look, I made him such a good friend and today he does not even talk to me. I did so many favors for him and he has turned against me!' By thinking all these thoughts we waste the time we have in the present. We should not do this, Okay!

It is futile to search for a true friend in the world. Befriend the Truth (Divine) and the World is yours.

322. "The Cause of Return"

Most of us come into this world with the seed in us, "It's not OK" and all our life we try to correct events, people and situations. How much can you correct? It's like trying to rearrange the clouds in the sky. This seed does not allow you to be happy, to smile from your heart, to be loving and loveable. It's there all the time like a thorn - irritating, irritating.

This seed, "It's not OK," brings you back into this world again and again. How do you burn this seed?

First recognize that it is there. This can happen in deep introspection and meditation. Sometimes you feel your body, mind, intellect, memory and ego are also not OK. You justify them or find fault with them. These are also part of the world. Acknowledge what you see as an imperfection and offer it to the Divine.

Have faith in the infinite organizing power of the Supreme Intelligence and have the sincere feeling, "Let thy will be done". Then the seed, "It's not OK," gets burned. "Thy will be done" is a state of total contentment, a state of just love.

We need not even make it a statement about the future. "Thy will alone is happening now".

Question: So everything happening is God's will?

Gurujī: Yes, including the thought, "This shouldn't be happening".

323. You say from movement to stillness is meditation, but to attain stillness through karma would be a bondage. So how do you attain stillness in spite of karma?

Sri Sri: That is what the whole skill of meditation is. In meditation, you somehow skillfully make the mind settle down and then, those few moments it settles, it is really still. It can't be still forever, then again it starts, and some karma gets released. You know, not all karmas are active all the time, some are dormant, and some are active. So the dormant karma starts becoming active. When it is active, then you open up and you come to the surface and then again after sometime, karma cannot be active all the time, so in-between, again and again you go and become quiet again.

324. Dear Gurudev, what is success in love?

Sri Sri: Love is not a business to have success or failure, love is not a career to have success or failure, love is not even an act which you can call as success or failure, love is your nature my dear! Whether you express it or not, it is there. Just realize love as your nature, you will not think of it as success or failure.

Some people may understand you and some may not. Some people who are in love with you, you cannot say that they will be in love with you forever. People who have lived together for 20 years, and had said at one point of time that they were made for each other, suddenly find that they were never compatible, and that they never got along. Suddenly people feel suffocated and want to go their own ways.

Love is not an act, love is not even a situation, and it is our very nature. If you are in love with somebody don't think that it will be forever, unless and until there is knowledge or wisdom in it. Love with wisdom is eternal bliss. Love with selfishness or love for individual pleasure, sooner or later will bring misery and heart break. If your love is there to help others, nobody can destroy it, but if your love is to get something from the other, sooner or later, it will be broken into pieces.

325. Am I ready to receive my Guru's grace?

Sri Sri: Yes! Those who are not ready will not come here at all. The fact that you have come means that you are ready.

326. Why is not every human being pure?

Sri Sri: Every human is pure but filled with dirt. Every human being is like a diamond. The fact that the diamond is in mud does not make it mud. You simply have to pick it up and wash it and it shines again. The shiny nature of diamond is always there but covered with mud and slush.

327. My mind always travels to many things. I do have jealousy and hatred with my own people. I know it's not right, how I control the mind that takes me away and never leaves me good. Please help me Guruji; I hope that from today I will have good feelings and peace of mind. I want to be a different person; I'm sick and tired already.

Sri Sri: I think you have too much free time on your hands. Just get into doing something good for the world, some service projects, something. The mind is like that, sometimes up and sometimes down. You like something, next day you don't like it. Who cares! If you're caring for your emotions too much, you will be nowhere. One day you feel good, another day you don't feel good. Again the same thing! So the mind goes up and down.

'Centeredness' knows that you are much more than your mind, than your emotions, and mind plays tricks. Just imagine you are a mother and the mind is the baby. Sometimes the mother agrees with the baby, sometimes not. Sometimes the child cries and the mother will attend to the baby. At other times she will let it cry for a little while. Don't be bothered by this all of the time. See how much harmony you can bring into others.

It's our responsibility; each one of us should take responsibility to create an uplifting atmosphere, one of positivity. Once you are centered than you become a source of inspiration, a source of joy, a source of peace to everyone. So we have to think, "so what?" Not every time, everything goes according to what we want, so then we say "so what?" and if "so what" doesn't help then "so hum" (the Sudarshan Kriya taught in the 'Art of Living' courses) definitely helps. A combination of "so what" and "so hum" puts you on a higher platform.

328. If love is our very nature then why do we make one person as the object of our love?

Sri Sri: From birth we have known love to be directed from a person. Love gets personalized from birth. So the child gets birth and looks at the mother and starts feeling that love. Association kindles the feeling of love inside of you. But when it matures it starts understanding love is not just an emotion it is one's very existence. Love directed towards an individual is one aspect of the Universal love. First a person stimulates the love inside of you and when you go deep in meditation you will find that love doesn't need any stimuli from outside, it already exists everywhere.

Actually we are floating in an ocean of love. It's like when you are in a bathtub, you feel the heat the first time, when you get into it. Heat or cold, when you get into a river you feel the coolness of the river or the chill of it. But then after a while you get used to it, you don't feel it anymore. Same way when you get into a hot pool, for the first few moments, you feel the heat. Then you don't feel the heat, you get used to it.

In the same way personalized love in the beginning kindles that, once it is there and then it assumes the universal form. So you may not feel it but still it will be there. Individuals are reminding that there is love in the Universe or you are love.

329. I am in the Advanced Meditation Program and I am enjoying. I thought when you dance you are happy but I had tears in my eyes. Please can you explain the emotion?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to explain emotions, tell me? What do you get out of it by explaining and understanding? Emotions are emotions. They are not sad tears, right? Tears need not come only when you are sad, that's not the only time when they come. When you are in deep love then also tears come. When you are grateful, tears come. When you are passionate, tears come. It's not only when you are sad.

Suppose you go into a meeting and everybody is so patriotic and singing patriotic song, then also you get tears. So these are sweet tears, its ok and it is said, this is what happens on the spiritual path, when the heart chakra opens up, the doubts disappear, tears start welling up in your eyes, a sense of joy takes over you.

330. You said not to hurt the ego of a man. But even when he hurts the feelings of his wife, how do I change his egoistic nature?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to change their nature? You change. When you change then they also change. They may not change also! Your husband may not change. No, we need to see life from a broader perspective. Then things make much more sense to us. We try to change people, their nature. Why do we do that? Because it is hurting us and the more we want to change someone because it is hurting us they are not going to change, I tell you. If you really want them to change, you have to wish for their welfare, because that is not good for them and if that is your intention, and with that wish they will change. I tell you they will change. Your every prayer will make them see things differently and behave differently. So that's the power of your intentions.

331. Even the Puranas and science are not very clear about the creation of human beings. Can you please explain?

Sri Sri: Creation is a mystery. It needs to be experienced and enjoyed, not to be understood and not to be explained. The secret of creation, the secret of birth, the secret of death are all there to wonder about this phenomenon called Universe.

332. Theoretically I can understand Advaita (non-duality) philosophy. But how to bring it to experience?

Sri Sri: No, no, this is pure science. Pure science does need to be brought into experience. Advaita is, seeing everything is one. This will help you to be stable. But when you are dealing in the world, you have to deal with duality only. Got it? You should know that everything is made up of wood, the table, the door, the chair. But how do I apply? You don't need to apply! Simply know that it is all wood and you use it as per their designation. You use table only as table, don't go and sit on the table, it will break. Don't use a chair for the door, a door for the table, no. We have to use them all for their designated purpose. At the same time, we should know all this is wood.

333. How can I take more initiatives? I wait for external motivations to take initiatives.

Sri Sri: It's ok. External motivation, internal inspiration, anyway you act that is good enough! The laziness when it takes over, only three things can help you come out of laziness.

First - love. You promise someone whom you love, 'I'm going to do this for sure', and then your laziness disappears. Promise to a loved one, with a time frame, and then you achieve it.

Second - fear, if someone tells you, 'If you don't do this then you are going to be in trouble', then laziness disappears.

The third thing is greed. If you are given some idea, some greed to complete a task, you will be right on it.

334. I want to improve my self-esteem. Please give me some tips and your blessing.

Sri Sri: No way, no chance! Because you think you have low self-esteem. Who told you? Come on, accept you don't know yourself. You don't know what all your capacity is. You accept the ignorance about yourself. If you think you know yourself, then you feel low self-esteem.

The moment you accept you don't know yourself, you can't say you have low self-esteem at all! That is the beginning point. If you accept, if you admit your ignorance about yourself, then you have taken the first step out of low self-esteem.

The second step is, know that you have been given all that you need to blossom. You are like a bud. A bud has everything it needs to become a flower. Third step to come out of low self-esteem, your connectedness to the Divinity and the fourth thing is not to be lazy. Chase the laziness away. That's it.

335. Can you please talk about Dashamahavidya?

Sri Sri: Mother Divine is seen in ten forms and in the ten, five tough appearance of Mother Divine and ten very soft. So this is Dashamahavidya. Five is very fierce and five very compassionate and joyful forms. Five forms to eliminate the evil and five forms to bestow blessings. These are called Dashamahavidyas. Kali, Tara, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Chinnamasta, these are five 'ugra' forms, depicting the five fierce forms of nature, the Mother Divine, where she destroys the negative, the demonic forces.

And then the five bestowing boons, blessings that are Lalita, Bhuvaneshwari, Matangi, Kamalatmika and Bhairavi. These are very 'saumya roop', pleasant forms. So these are the different forms of one Divinity, one Mother Divine, and one energy. Different times people have adored, worshipped, sung in different forms and if you go into the depth of the meaning, you have to really analyze. Because the ancient people always spoke in terms of symbols. The highest truth was spoken in a symbolic language.

336. In the yoga sutras you talk about higher levels of dispassion. Could you talk about how dispassion can also have levels?

Sri Sri: Yes, as much dispassion you have, that much happiness you have.

337. The theory of creation in the scriptures seems to contradict the theory of evolution according to Darwin. Could you talk about which one to believe?

Sri Sri: Which theory of creation are you thinking as contradictory? Actually the whole world is just appearance. It appears to be so. You should read Yog Vashishta; you will get more idea about it. When you keep a spoon inside water, half of the spoon appears to be bent. So when did the spoon bend, if you ask me, what do I say? It didn't bend, it appears so. When it start appearing to be like that? It appears like that anytime!

Similarly this idea of something got created at one point of time itself is erroneous, because the whole Universe is an appearance in consciousness. When did the mirage get created? What do you say? It never got created; it appears to be like that! The same way, this whole creation is made up of Brahman, is Brahman, is once consciousness and it appears to be like this.

Like a tennis ball, where is the beginning of a tennis ball? It never begins in the first place. It just appears, it is there. Does a ball begin somewhere? Or end somewhere? Every point is beginning, every point is an end. That's why this Universe is called 'Anaadi', beginningless, 'Ananta', endless. 'Adhyantarahita', the one word for Mother Divine is, the beginning and endless. Without the beginning and without the end. This is higher mathematics.

Usually we think linear. Everything should begin, everything should end somewhere. But when you go in the higher knowledge, it is appearance rather than beginning or ending. This is the beauty of Vedanta philosophy; this is how it is much different from all other theories that we think of in the world.

See if you go to Hawaii, which is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, miles and miles all around there is nothing. Now if someone starts researching, how did coconut plant come there, someone will say 'Oh in Malaysia, a coconut fell in the water, it travelled all the way to Hawaii Island and then it became a tree'. There is no proof for this! But yes, all the flora and fauna is present in Hawaii, an island.

There are many trees, and people were also there. So to me it looks very absurd when people say the first human being was born in Africa and then he travelled to Constantinople, from there Aryans came and invaded India, and it did blah, blah, blah. All these theories are rubbish! Because we want to see one point from where the tennis ball began.

If you see from a quantum physicist or a real rational scientific viewpoint, you find in the

whole creation, things have happened everywhere simultaneously. Nature can make a coconut plant grow in Kerala and Hawaii at the same time! It doesn't have to export a coconut from Kerala all the way to Hawaii or vice-versa! Now they have found there is water on the surface of Moon and Mars. Somebody will come up with a theory that from Earth, Moon became a part of it and water came there. Because we try to think linear, we have to think spherical, and then things will make much better sense.

338. My partner cheated on me. When I confronted him, he says, 'You do not possess me'. What to do in such a situation?

Sri Sri: It is a very tough situation. I have no experience, how can I give you any ideas or suggestions? But I understand your predicament. You know why they cheat on you? It is because they value your love and are afraid of losing your love.

Whenever someone close to you tells you a lie, it is just because love wins over truth. If truth wins, it is afraid of losing love. So why a person lies is because they do not want to lose the love of the other person. When someone is cheating on you and their mind is going towards someone else, what do you do? Just pray, have patience and understand their mind. Give them three warnings, and even then if they don't listen, then take some drastic steps.

We have created a mediation cell in almost every big city court. When such cases come up and when the couple speaks to our teachers, they help in conflict resolution. Our teachers talk to them and make them understand life from a bigger context. Then suddenly they patch up.

The Chief Justice in the High Court in Delhi told us that 80% of the cases that are sent to the mediation cell are all getting resolved by The Art of Living volunteers. It's welcome news.

339. Gurudev in today's satsang 12-March-2015

"Let's keep our awareness in present moment and not have any ill feeling about anybody on the planet. Hearts need to be pure. There is this one prayer, which says 'sabko sanmati de Bhagavan'. You know Gayatri mantra; it says let the divine inspire all our intellect. See it's the intellect, which gives direction to our life. It's not throwing off the intellect, the logic. That is not spirituality.

Many people think spirituality means just being emotional and not using your brains. That is wrong. It says, let the Divine inspire our intellect, make the intellect so sharp, logical, reasonable, and rational and reach the highest goal. Simultaneously develop the rational and that which is beyond that and go beyond the rational mind to the experiential realm of consciousness, which of course defies all logic! 'Sabko sanmati de Bhagavan', Mahatma Gandhi used to sing this every day, 'Oh my God give a good brain to everybody, good

thoughts to everybody, let noble thoughts come into our minds'. It's a collective prayer.

Let our intellect be soaked in Divinity and let the Divine inspire our intellect. Let the good thoughts flow, the noble thoughts flow into our minds. This is the prayer. That is what you can pray right. People who appear to be incorrigible what do need to say to them is 'sabko sanmati de Bhagavan'.

340. How to handle teenagers?

Sri Sri: There is an old Sanskrit proverb which says, if your son or daughter becomes sixteen years, you should no longer be their father or mother, you should be their friends. Befriend them and understand their mindset, understand their difficulties. Transformation can only happen through understanding not by imposing. You cannot impose your ideas on your children, or for that matter on anybody.

All that you can do is place your ideas before them and if they are doing something wrong, you should really make them aware of the ill effects of that. Someone is going into drugs; you take them to a place where there are drug addicts and how they are suffering. Show them, 'look at this boy, look at this girl, and look at their face. Look where they have reached. Do you want to be like that?' This is what we need to tell them, only through education and education can only happen when you have accepted people, you have understood their position, their predicaments and create a space for them to grow.

You need to create a much-needed space for someone to grow and through persuasion not through imposing your ideas. Just look back and remember, how when you were a teenager, how your parents used to force some ideas on you, did you like it? No. From generation to generation, there is some gap that comes up, whether you like it or you don't, it happens. The skill is how you bridge that gap. This is what is needed. The second thing is, it's not just between generations, and it is between cultures.

In India you go every two hundred miles, the culture changes. Language changes, culture changes and in the world also it is the same, Europe is the same. So how can we bridge the cultural difference, how can we bridge the religious differences, how can we bridge the generation gap, this we need to put our mind on and I tell you it is very simple to do that.

Three things, purity in our heart and sense of belongingness with everybody. Whether other feel like that or not is none of our business. From your side you feel that they are all part of me, everyone belongs to me. This is the spiritual path. Spiritual path is what? No one is an alien, no one is a foreigner, and everyone belongs to you. However they are whatever they are.

341. Today you had tweeted an interesting article that consciousness makes this physical world. Can you explain this? So many consciousnesses are creating so many universes. How is this possible?

Sri Sri: Yes, yes. There are a multitude of Universes. A Universe inside another, inside another. So our brain is nothing but a frequency analyzer. Our perception is like keeping a radio needle on one particular frequency. If you move that then another reality dawns. It is so fascinating, that is why I tweet that article.

342. It happens often with me that I think or say something and it happens immediately or after a while.

Sri Sri: See this is what happens, when you meditate, when you do Sudarshan Kriya, meditation, what happens? This is exactly what happens. Whatever you think starts happening or whatever is going to happen, those thoughts come to you. Before you need something, you already have it. That is perfection; so you better ask for something bigger, don't ask for small things. So you create it.

Your intention, then a little attention on it and then manifestation happens. See all the work happens only through intention. Even to come here, you intended that you want to go to ashram. So, that very intention took your body to get into the car and drive through all the traffic and you landed here. So intention, attention and then manifestation follow.

343. All religions are messengers of peace, then why does only Hinduism have care for animals?

Sri Sri: There are many things you can wonder as to why Hinduism is like this, why Buddhism is like that or Jainism is different. One thing you need to see that uniqueness in every religion and in every tradition, in itself is a world heritage. That uniqueness is not only in religion, it's a world heritage. Now, you should not forget that there are Jains who are totally vegetarians who honour animals. I think you don't know that there are people in the west also. There are a large number of people who are vegans. They respect animals.

There are animal rights associations everywhere in the world now. I think this is a wrong concept in India, we think outside India, everybody will be eating meat or everybody will be cruel to animals. No, that is not the case. Throughout the world there is big awareness about the benefits of vegetarianism, throughout the world there are societies for prevention of cruelty to animals. Compassion towards nature, for animals, for protecting the environment, you can find everywhere. It's more and more today. More and more people are respecting the animal rights.

344. When everything is there in the Vedas then what is the role of Science?

Sri Sri: Yes like everything is there in nature, but you can also understand it through science, you need to sometimes.

345. In the Yoga Vasishtha it is said that the present moment is very deep. How are the past and future also in the present?

Sri Sri: Well you remember the past in the present and the plans for the future also happen in the present moment. That's it.

346. How can we control the mind?

Sri Sri: Through the breath. If you can control your breath then know that you can control your mind. Do pranayam; once you keep doing pranayam you will start gaining control on your mind. You cannot control the mind directly, it is not possible. When you like something then the mind is there fully.

Suppose you like a movie, that two-three hours you are truly focused. The focus stays on the television or the screen because you like something. Mind gets focused when there is liking for it. Suppose you don't like something and still you have to focus, and then take the help of breath.

Breath can help the mind focus. If you love something you don't need to focus, focus is already there. Love brings focus along with it. Correct? And then greed can help you focus. Fear, automatically the fear takes the focus along with it. Then dispassion, if none of these three things work then the fourth one I would say is dispassion. Dispassion can bring focus and fifth one is pranayam, breathing. Breathing can focus your mind.

347. You say life is a combination of both destiny and free will. Relationships and marriage are they a part of destiny or free will.

Sri Sri: if it's a happy one then it is free will, if it's an unhappy one then it's your destiny! It's up to you. You say it is your destiny, when something happens that you don't like! It's so obvious.

348. Our Gujarati Avallakki can be made in five minutes; can you give us something for instant enlightenment also?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: See Gujarati Avallakki (flattened / pressed rice recipe) can be made in

five minutes, but for a child to be born it takes nine months. Right? In the same way, you cannot have a school child write a PhD thesis. Someone in kindergarten cannot instantaneously become a PhD graduate. So you have a life, and you have to move through life gradually and you will find the evolution unstoppable. It is happening naturally.

You can't have an instant mango, in an instant mango tree! It takes some time and if you forcefully ripen a mango, it doesn't taste good. Mango should be given its due time to ripen, only then will it taste good. So don't be in a hurry, just relax.

349. It is said that during the time of Lord Rama, India used to be so technologically advanced that there were aeroplanes. Is it true?

Sri Sri: Well all that we have found is an old manuscript by a Rishi called Bharadwaj, the 'Bharadwaja Vaimanic Shastra'. The Science department has taken the book and published it in English as well. So they have mentioned how through solar power it was possible to fly. More than that we don't know.

We find some diagrams, some indication to this and one thing for sure that is documented, one Mr. Shastri, from India went to Mumbai and with the help of a Parsi businessman, flew the first plane several years before Wright brothers. But the world knows the Wright brothers as the first to fly a plane, which is not correct, because this was printed in the English newspaper, in London, that two Indian people have flown a plane for fifteen minutes on Chowpatty beach, in Mumbai. This is documented. But what the British did is, put the two people in jail and they pressurized them to give the knowledge.

Finally they did not give everything, they gave something, which after thirty years or so, the Wright brothers could successfully fly the plane. There is a documentary on this. Some television people have done it, you can look into it and there is a lot of description about Vimana. The word Vimana means aeroplane. If there is a word it must be in existence in the past. How from Sri Lanka, in one day, Rama went back to Ayodhya. It is not possible without a plane in those days and all the dates are documented. But in the colonial days, some of the historians did not want to acknowledge this. So they tried to push it down.

Lord Mc Caulay wrote to Queen Victoria, unless you destroy the spiritual heritage of this country, you cannot rule this country. He wrote a letter to Queen Victoria, it is still available. Lord Mc Caulay when he came to India he travelled length and breadth of India, and he said this country is so rich, I couldn't find one beggar and one sick person in this country and the cultural heritage is so strong, you can never rule this country unless you destroy the spiritual heritage of this country. So then they brought a number of startling rules.

They first made a law, barring all architects to work. That's why they made Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. All the architects were asked not to work. So after the eighteenth century, there is not a single building made by Indian architects in all the British provinces.

Then they put a bar on the weavers, so that they can bring all the clothes from Leicester and Birmingham. So there were all these colonial rules and systematically, the Ayurveda system was banished. Because of one British soldier. In Indian when someone lost, they would cut a little bit of their nose, they would never kill because killing is wrong.

The only way to show someone has been defeated is they would cut a little piece of the nose. When he came out of the Mysore kingdom, an Ayurvedic doctor caught hold of this soldier and in just three hours time he does plastic surgery, he fixes the nose back. This soldier on his return writes to Queen Victoria, 'our country is far behind the medical science that is prevalent here, we must learn from the medical science here'.

There is much such documentation to prove that there was a lot of this knowledge that was available and in those days without internet, without cellphone, Columbus tried to find India and found America! Why would he try to find India? That was a time when this knowledge was beyond Cambodia.

Even today in Cambodia, huge temples are there. In Mahabharat, you must have heard of Kambhoj. That's Cambodia. Revival of this education is essential and its only been in the last two decades that Ayurveda has been revived. Its good scientists are rediscovering. Well whatever the past has been, they may know, they may not know, but what we need to do is take the good from wherever it is. Whether east, west, north or south, whether past or present, we should take the best.

Every culture every civilization has something good, something great in them. We must take those things and be a global citizen. That's what I feel. The boundaries are all man-made, real boundaries don't exist. The whole planet is ours, we should think that and all its wealth is ours. Whether it is in Spanish, in Chinese, in Japanese, whatever language, whatever culture, it all belongs to us. That is real evolution. If u start feeling the planet is mine, everyone in this planet belongs to me, and then you are moving in the right direction.

350. How to increase Faith?

Sri Sri: "False securities do not allow your faith to grow. When you have dropped your securities, then your faith grows. When you buffer your life with securities, you keep the faith away. It is the faith that brings perfection in you. Faith is the greatest security.

If you have all the material securities and not have faith, you will still reel in fear. You have to let go of all possessions in the mind. False security is keeping things where they don't belong. It is an illusion of security because of having a job, a house, and friends. Keep the house where it belongs, not in the mind. Keep the money in the bank or in the pocket, not in the mind. Keep friends and family where they belong, not in the mind.

The Divine is your only security. Faith is realizing that you always get what you need.

Faith is giving the Divine a chance to act. Your body belongs to the world. Your spirit belongs to the Divine”.

351. If God is all pervading why is it difficult to attain God?

Sri Sri: So that you can ask this question! It is not difficult. It is your understanding that you think it is difficult. It is not difficult or it appears to be very difficult because we have moved away from reality, moved away from our natural self. So it appears to be difficult. See someone who has never driven car feels it's so difficult to drive a car. Someone who is never on a bicycle thinks it is so difficult. Some people say it is so difficult to close your eyes and not do anything.

People say meditation is very, very difficult. Do you think meditation is difficult? How many of you think it is easy? (Many raise their hands). If I say meditation is very easy people don't believe me! Because you have learnt it. All that you need is a pure heart, clean heart. All that you need to do is to drop the greed. That if you drop, if you relax, it is right there!

352. What did you download or upload at Naimisharanya?

Sri Sri: Aranya means that in which there is no conflict. Forest is also called aranya because in forest there is no conflict. A lion just does not go and kill all the animals. Once its hunger is satisfied, it just stays. A lioness never goes and harms other animals unnecessarily. They go and kill only when they are very hungry. Same with birds, birds don't and kill all the fish in the lake. They go only when they want it. So the forest is a place where there is no conflict, no fight, and no war. So for a moment if you realize that there is no conflict of any sort, you get in touch with your Self, your true Self and from there all knowledge comes.

From the Self, which is devoid of all conflict, the knowledge comes. That's what Naimisharanya is. Devotion is 'Atma rathya virodhe nethi Sandilya'. One of the rishis Sandilya has said, as mentioned in the Narada Bhakti Sutra, rejoicing in one's Self without any conflict that is devotion.

353. Enlightenment and attaining Siddhis, are both the same or different?

Sri Sri: Siddhis come on the way for Sadhaks (seekers), some powers here and there. But if you are after it, you lose it very soon. It creates another bondage. So the more you ignore Siddhis, it keeps happening to you. Siddhis are those happenings in your life which you think is not normal, which you don't think is an event in a logical sequence, events which defy laws of cause and effect, those are called Siddhis.

354. If everything is apparent reality, then what is actual reality?

Sri Sri: First you realize everything is apparent. Then you find out! Then it will be obvious.

355. Many years ago I used to enjoy satsangs so much, now I am not enjoying satsangs especially when you are not there.

Sri Sri: You should start leading the satsangs. If you have been a follower for too long, it may create some boredom for you. That's why should start leading satsangs for some time. If you are leading satsangs for too long then also it will get boring so you should follow some time. You should keep changing your roles or just stand and dance in satsangs or write some new songs, you don't have to keep singing the same things, you write some bhajans.

Use the creativity that you have. Boredom comes only when you eat, sleep, do some little work and then you again eat, sleep and do little work. Till the time we don't give some to society, we don't do something creative there is a part of our life which remains incomplete, then comes frustration, the mind becomes unhappy and if you do nothing then you get depressed. This is what happens. There are so many things that can be done. If you engage your mind with something or the other, then we will never be unhappy. Till the time you are alive, we should keep doing something. That is also what is said in the Upanishads, keep working and with the intention to live a hundred years. This is what you should do.

This world is maya; here people keep busy yet still get unhappy, till they get unattached to the work. Be detached from what you do. Work with enthusiasm and rest in your Self. Let everything be. You cannot correct everyone and in any organization or society you do have four 'achche' (good people), four 'kachhe' (immature people) and four 'luchche' (useless people). The world is made up of 12 types of people, four 'achche', four 'kachhe' and four 'luchche'. If you keep focusing on the 'luchhe' around you, then you too will fall into the same category. All types of people are required, they all have a purpose. Rajo Guna, Tamo Guna and Satva Gunas, they all have their purpose.

356. Where your energy is focused, that aspects of your life will grow. If you focus on negativity then that will multiply. If you focus on the goodness and the wonder then that will grow.

357. "Water and Ghee, both are fluids, but a drop of Ghee floats on water. It doesn't sink. Similarly, in a negative atmosphere, be like a drop of Ghee, where you keep your integrity and you float. Don't be like a stone which sinks deep inside".

358. Life is a struggle when you do not have knowledge. With knowledge, the same life you considered a struggle turns out to be a sport.

359. Your richness is in your ability to share and not in how much you have.

360. When you don't respect yourself, things add value to you. When you respect the self, you add values to the things.

361. If you are confident then you will not lose your temper. Losing temper is the sign of weakness. You feel that the situation is overpowering you and you don't know your strength that is why you get angry.

So, when you understand this and are able to watch and be aware of what is happening inside, you will not get upset. Even if you get upset never mind, just be aware that it is coming and it is going.

362. If you are in love with somebody, that love is a gift to you.

363. Shraddha (Faith) means loving the unknown. You know, you either love or do not love that which you already know about. Right? But if there is something you do not know, then you do not hate it, and you also have a choice to love it or not. Loving something, which you have no idea about, is called shraddha. Shraddha brings you knowledge.

364. Small things upset you from time to time and your mind gets caught up. Just drop all these and recognize that everything is part of a divine process.

365. "Attachments cause a feverish breath and this feverish breath takes away peace of mind. Then you are in pieces and fall prey to misery. Before you get scattered too much gather yourself and rid your breath of feverishness through surrender and sadhana! Your attachment to the Divine is your beauty! Unfortunately most people do not notice this until it is too late!"

366. I am 70 years old and I talk about your grace wherever I go. I have come here with full faith and gratefulness. My sons have sent me and told me to spread your knowledge amongst people, in every house, and in every village. Since the past six years I am going from house to house spreading this knowledge. When I organized a course in Pritampura, I did not leave a single house or block uncovered and as a result 113 people did the Art of Living Yoga (Sri Sri Yoga) course.

Sri Sri: Just see the enthusiasm of this mother. You should not say, 'Oh, I cannot do this, I

have become so old and aged'. Even in old age you can talk to people around you and help cleanse people's minds. With the aging body, you cannot clean a room as you do not have the strength; but with words at least you can cleanse people's minds. So, we can all do a lot. Stop thinking, 'what will they think about me?' Just be shameless and do service.

People who want to think will keep doing so; their work is only to think. Even if you do something good, people will criticize. They will think negative about you also, because that is all that some people can do. But if by your words at least some people's minds get cleansed then that is good.

We should not waste our time. No matter where we may go, we should always be in this knowledge. Then our enthusiasm does not reduce in life. Otherwise you will continue crying that you did not get this, or you did not get that; or you have some illness or the other. In life, with this physical body, something or the other happens all the time. Sometimes you might suffer from a headache, or you might catch a cold, or your tummy might get upset due to over-eating. Recently I read a report in some paper that rather than people dying of starvation, the number of people dying from over eating is more.

367. If you make someone feel guilty about their mistake, then you have not forgiven them. That guilt itself is a punishment. There is nothing that love cannot transform. Accommodate people and see they will be transformed.

368. Why do children look so beautiful? From any country, anywhere on the planet, they are fresh as flowers. It is because their minds are clear like crystals; there is innocence in them and everyone appreciates the smile that comes from that innocence. There is beauty in it. Have you ever observed whenever you see children or spend time with them, your tiredness just vanishes, dullness vanishes; a wave of beauty arises in you and innocence comes.

369. How does a youth handle the ups and downs of life?

Sri Sri: I am a youth myself! Life is a mixture of everything: failure & success - they complement each other. If you fail, then you know the value of success, it is a stepping-stone.

You need to move forward: ask yourself, what did I learn from the past, and then what is my vision for the future? This will keep you going. For this, you need presence of mind, and for this, you need to get rid of stress.

370. Gurudev, I do my sadhana regularly, attend satsang and do seva also. Yet there are many times in life when I am unable to make proper decisions. Why does this happen?

Sri Sri: See, there are two main reasons why you are unable to take decisions.

1. When there is some feverishness of desire attached to it; or there is some greed. Then you find it difficult to take a decision.

2. When there is some fear in you, then also you are not able to take proper decisions. The mind gets stuck in between greed and fear, due to which we remain in confusion

So just get rid of the fear and the greed. That's it!

371. You Are Multi-Dimensional

At one level, the self knows everything and at another level, there is this realization, 'I don't know anything, I know very little'. This keeps your consciousness light and innocent and that light and innocent consciousness or mind is the basis of intuitive ability, the basis of the mystic and ultimate blossoming of the divinity.

The moment you think, 'I know', you become very hard. When you feel, 'I don't know!' then you feel more alert because then there is a sense of wanting to know. When you want to know, you are so alert. When you think you know, your mind is away from the knowledge at that moment. When you think you know it, you are getting into some sort of hardness or inertia.

Again this is on one level only. We have multi-layers of consciousness, you are multi-dimensional. That is why on one level, everyone knows that, 'I am never going to die'. You all live as though, you will live here forever. Nobody feels, 'I am going to die one day,' because one aspect in you is never going to die.

372. Only deep knowledge can bring celebration.

You should have contentment. Know that you are at the right place, doing the right thing, and remember only the best will happen to you. Only the best will happen. This we must believe strongly. Everything is being taken care of. Challenges do come in life and every challenge makes you're strong and make you shine from within. Only diamond gets cut. When a diamond gets cut, it shines more. Similarly gold, they put gold in fire. It shines more. Sugarcane, the more you crush, the more sweetness comes. If you crush sugarcane, it does not say I am going to give you bitter juice.

Similarly, in our life a little issue come but that will be very small thing. We should know this well. See life from a bigger perspective. Life is much bigger. This is not the only life. We had

many in the past. We will have in the future. See from the broad vision. That's it. The more contentment you have, I tell you, and miracles will be abundant in your life. See everybody, if someone it is not happening don't worry, it will happen to you too. That is the beauty of this path. Abundance of everything. Be on this path. Bring this fragrance to many more people.

Colombia trip was very good. Colombia was trending in India on Twitter. Many people, in Taiwan, China, didn't even know that a country like Colombia exists. We have a lot of responsibility also. Our responsibility, we do it with a smile. Like a feather. If you have seen the picture of Krishna, there is a crown and a peacock feather on it. You know what it is? That is Krishna is taking the responsibility of the whole world, but it is not weighing heavy on his head. It is like a feather. Colorful and light.

Usually responsibility means heavy. But, when you live knowledge responsibility is feather light. If responsibility becomes very light, there is a smile on your face. Otherwise you see people with big responsibility, they look so sad. But, this is Art of Living. With great enthusiasm move on and give me all your problems. When you give your problems, you become lighter. How many of you experienced? It works? Yes? That's it.

Others, from other countries, go back to your country and create a big wave there. Next year will be very good and the year after we will find a great change in the world consciousness. In 2017 - You will find a lot of people's lives transforming. This year we have to work. Next year also. Some challenges come, nothing big. We have all the energy to move through and celebrate 2017. See this year (2015) already such a big change. World over, people did International Yoga Day. 1/3rd of world's population, 2 billion people, from Japan, Taiwan to almost every part of the world, they all practiced yoga, meditation. It is a very big step.

373. "When we are joyful, then everyone wants to be with us. Otherwise, if a wife sits with a long face all day, then the moment the husband returns home and sees her face, he feels like running away! (Laughter) Then he comes home, quickly changes his clothes and runs off to some other place. If the lady of the house is happy, and does not go on complaining, then no matter how the day may have been, the husband feels like coming home thinking of the joy and peace he will feel at home.

One often wants a life partner in order to fill each other's life with love. But what do people end up doing instead? They fill each other's life with misery. They make each other's life difficult. This should not happen.

All of you should take this sankalpa today – that whether it be your friends, family members, relatives, husband or wife, whoever comes to you should leave with more joy and peace. You will not give them a chance to complain. You will endure and go through whatever karma you have to bear, but you will make their life happier.

Why should we trouble and burden others with our karma? Sharing one's sorrow never reduces it and Joy never lessens by sharing, it only increases. So share joy, and surrender your sorrow and misery to the Divine, or just bear it and go through it, thinking of it as your penance. When you follow this, then your personality blossoms and all your talents and skills get enhanced".

374. Blessed are those who are Bored!

Only a conscious, alert and dynamic person can get bored. A dull and inert person doesn't get bored. If you get bored, it indicates you are more alive and human. It is a sign that you are growing, that you are evolving.

An animal, for example, keeps doing the same thing. It never gets bored. Cows, horses, birds do the same things over and over all their lives.

People eat, watch television, change jobs, change partners to escape boredom and they get frustrated and frustration takes them back to inertia and unconsciousness.

Only in two states the boredom does not occur: in a state of total inertia or in a state of Divine Consciousness. If you are bored, it indicates you are evolving. Boredom moves you.

Question: Boredom moves you towards the divine?

Answer: Yes. Be proud of your boredom and celebrate!

375. Remember one thing. The center core of your existence is all positivity. All imperfection is only on the circumference. So deep inside you are pure, you are innocent, you are beautiful, and you must have total conviction in this. That is it. I am totally pure hundred percentages, two hundred percentages positive. Deep inside you is simply a most adorable, most lovable person. You should have zero doubt about it and whatever imperfections you may find in yourself or in others are only on the circumference. This conviction is most important in spiritual growth.

Otherwise someone blames you, you take the blame and then you burn with it. When you have this conviction, if anybody says anything to you, you will not care and will simply smile at them. You will not be an emotional wreck anytime, because you are so solid and well founded in the self and that is what the whole spiritual exercise is! Shudhohum, budhohum – You are pure, crystal clear and solid. That conviction makes you rest so peacefully. If you are made by nature, you are perfect. Everything in nature is perfect.

There is one school of thought, which says find imperfection. Another school of thought is to move from perfection to greater perfection. That is what we understand. Praising each

other and praising oneself uplift the spirit all the time.

Give criticism and stand up to criticism. If someone criticizes you, welcome that, knowing too well that whatever is the criticism is part of their perception or your projection. Imperfection is nothing but a projection or perception. From your side you have projected like that to the other person or that person has perceived you like that. Imperfection is nothing but your inability to project the way you are to others or the perception of other person towards you. That's it. Got it?

All these practices you do are to get to this stage – Improving perception, observation and expression and that is it. It can never be hundred percent. It is relative, this is the thing. There can always be a chance for improvement in perception and expression. But there is no chance for any improvement in the being.

376. "Feel the Pinch"

A devotee asked Guruji: Please forgive me if I have committed a mistake.

Sri Sri: Why should you be forgiven? You are asking for forgiveness because you feel a pinch and you want to be free from it, isn't it? Let the pinch be there. The pinch will not let the mistake happen again. Forgiveness removes the pinch and you keep repeating the mistake!

Question: How do you know a mistake is a mistake?

Sri Sri: A mistake is something that gives you a pinch. If it hasn't pinched you, it is not a mistake at all.

It is the pinch that irks the consciousness and that pinch disallows the mistake to be repeated. Be with the pinch and not the guilt. It is a very fine balance.

Question: What is the difference between guilt and pinch?

Sri Sri: Guilt is about a specific action and pinch is about a specific result or happening. You can only feel guilty about what you did and not about what happened. But whatever happened, whether because of you or someone else can cause a pinch in you.

Question: How do we get over the guilt?

Tom Gill: Just blame the boss! (Laughter)

Sri Sri: Through wisdom, by knowing the nature of mind, nature of consciousness and from a broader perspective of the phenomenon, you can get over the guilt.

Question: Can't we learn from our mistakes without feeling the pinch?

Sri Sri: Learning is at an intellectual level whereas you feel the pinch at an emotional level. The drive of your emotions is much stronger than your intellect. So a pinch will not let the mistake recur.

Bharat: We feel guilt where we have control; it is at the intellectual level, whereas a pinch is at the emotional level where we do not have control.

Question: So, should we discard the intellect?

Sri Sri: You cannot be driven by your emotions alone. Your intellect acts like a brake for your emotions!

Feel the pinch. The pinch will create an awareness that what happened was beyond your capacity. The awareness will bring you to surrender. Surrender will free you from guilt. So, from pinch to awareness to surrender to freedom are the steps of evolution.

377. Even though we know what is wrong and right, we are still not able to stop ourselves from doing something wrong. What do we do?

Sri Sri: That's happens because of greed. The greed of some pleasure makes you do wrong things. Fear can stop you from falling into this greed or a higher ideal or love can stop you or third is fulfillment, when you are content and happy then you will not into wrong actions. Lack of some juice in life is the root cause of all distortions in life. When there is no joy and love in life then mind wants to attain something from somewhere.

378. How to be happy through the ups and downs in life?

Sri Sri: This is why you are here! How many of you are able to stay happy through the ups and downs after doing the basic program? (Many raise their hands) See! How many have experienced that you get whatever that you wish for? (Again many raise their hands) See. All those who have not experienced it, just have a look around. This is the secret.

379. God is considered as a sea of compassion. If everything happens as per karma without any interference from God, then how is it that God is compassionate?

Sri Sri: You don't know what is going on in the mind of the director! You watch movies right? Do you know how he directs the movies? No? Find that out then you will know about God too!

380. Can marriages take place within the same Gotra?

Sri Sri: This time when I went to Haryana, I met some scientists who had done some good research which showcased how their genes were so good because they did not marry within the same Gotra. They demonstrated how maximum medals in sports were won by sportsmen from Haryana. So this is what the research said. Even in animal science this is followed. Also you should not marry siblings or close relatives. So from a scientific point of view this looks logical but then our Gotras are so ancient and have expanded so much that I don't think it is right to put too much weight on it.

For instance if you are from the same Gotra but are from Haryana and Tamil Nadu, then it makes no sense to talk about Gotras then, but yes, if you're from the same region then it is better to avoid marrying in the same Gotra.

381. To what extent should one compromise especially with your wife?

Sri Sri: Well, I don't have any experience in this matter then how can I advise you? But I would say you she is the boss, the Prime Minister of the house, so you should listen to her! Or try to make her listen by some way or another. If you don't know how ask people who know some techniques!

There is a story of a husband and wife, where the wife would do the exact opposite of what the husband would ask her to do. So the husband was very disturbed. While roaming on the streets in this frame of mind, he met a Guru and told him about his predicament. So the Guru whispered some advice in his ear and asked him to follow it for some time.

After six months he met the Guru and seemed very happy. He said that the Guru's mantra worked. A person who was with them ask the Guru exactly what was it that worked, so the Guru revealed that his advice was that the husband should say exactly opposite of what it was that he wanted! So in this way the husband was able to modify his actions based on his wife's behaviour. This is skill. This is what you will get from yoga, communication skills. You keep complaining that people don't understand me. You never said that I don't know how to express myself, make other's understand.

382. We are not able to conduct happiness programs in our village. Please advice.

Sri Sri: Look, do what you can. Get people together, sat some good things; teach them a little bit of bhastrika, meditation. This will change the atmosphere in the village.

383. I am not able to do my sadhana due to my duties.

Sri Sri: I want to ask you something. Do you ever skip brushing your teeth because of your duty? I also had a lot of work today, met thousands of people. But because you are busy do you skip drinking water? Do you run the minute you wake up in the morning? Do you not use the restroom? Brush your teeth? If you don't brush your teeth, nobody will sit next to you. This is dental hygiene.

In the same way there doing pranayama and meditation is mental hygiene. You have to remove your stress and go to your duty with happy smile. You have to take a little time out to take out some time for it. Once it comes into a routine then it will not bother you as much. Take an intention to make it part of your routine that no matter what you will do some pranayama and mediation will take place. At least do it once everyday.

Even if you miss a few days it is ok. But I will not accept that there is no time. Even a person who is working has the same 24 hrs and the Prime Minister of the country also has the same 24 hrs. It is our skill as to how we are utilizing our time.

384. You ask people to follow you on Facebook and twitter but never on whatsapp. Why?

Sri Sri: Because I am not on whatsapp. I know what is up so I don't need to ask what's up! That's for you to ask what's up.

385. I am not able to get over some past events.

Sri Sri: You cannot just ignore these things. Wake up and see, the past is gone, life is in the present. Focus on the present moment. There is no benefit in chewing on past things.

386. I am not able to take the final decision. Please guide me.

Sri Sri: Well if not the final decision, at least take some decisions, something in the middle.

387. If I am the source of thought then is there difference between thought and should? Does the bad thought affect the soul?

Sri Sri: When do you realize that a thought is good or bad? When it has already come! You can't stop a thought or know that it is good or bad, before it comes and when it comes, it goes away immediately. If you are witness to it, then it moves away. But if you hold on to it and chew on it, then it stays with you.

Thoughts come and go but something which is the basis, beyond the thought, that is soul that is yoga. You're like the sky; the thoughts are like the clouds. This could be the nearest example one can give. Clouds come in the sky and they go away but will they be able to disturb the vastness of the sky? No! So when you go beyond the clouds, you will see that the sky is untouched. You will see that it is the clouds that are moving. That's what happens in meditation.

When you see the clouds as a witness then the clouds move away. You don't have to attach yourselves to the thought. It is foolishness! Good thoughts and bad thoughts come and they go. You are much above the thought. This is what is called Vihangam Marg, meaning rising above the clouds, the thoughts, and seeing that you have nothing to do with it.

388. How to get out of the past sex impressions?

Sri Sri: Your trying to get out of it, makes it more difficult. What we need to do is more pranayama and relaxes. Then you see on its own these thoughts won't disturb you. They won't come at all.

389. If love is unconditional then why do we keep expecting from loved ones?

Sri Sri: Well, expectation is also natural. When it comes up, you become aware that by expecting you are only reducing the joy. When you grow in wisdom, you will see that all these impressions, they all give way to something much bigger and beautiful than you are.

390. How will I live knowing that nobody loves me?

Sri Sri: Who says nobody loves you! If the air stops loving you, it will not go inside you at all. If Sun stops loving you, it will not shine on you at all. In the whole Universe there is love, why do you think nobody loves you? Never mind, even if nobody loves you; at least you give love to others. Love increases by giving, not by demanding. You are the source of love.

391. Is it possible for me to merge with you, while being in this body or I will have to leave this body for that?

Sri Sri: No, No, No. Don't leave the body, don't do such things, and don't even think about it. Who told you this? We are all anyway one! It is foolishness to think that you merge when you die. The body cannot merge and if you look at the level of the breath, we are all one. If you go subtler then you will see that at the mind level we are all the same. So don't do anything foolish. Do meditation, seva, satsang, and then contentment will shine through in life.

392. Do we really need to follow caste in marriages?

Sri Sri: See there are good people everywhere and there are bad people everywhere. All that you need to see that nobody betrays you after marriage. So you should also follow your parents' advice. Sometimes when you fall in love, you become blind so take the advice of parents and others. It doesn't matter what caste or religion they are from as long as they are good people, with good values. A person can be from the same caste or religion but is an alcoholic or a miscreant, and then what is the use. So the first thing that you should see is that the person is good, their background is good.

393. I see cows eating garbage on the streets. What do we do? I guess this problem is all over the country.

Sri Sri: All over the country! Those of you here, you should visit the garbage transformation machines here, which converts garbage into diesel. So now we are collecting all the plastics from the surrounding areas and putting it in the machine. In the same way gas is being produced from all the kitchen waste. We can replicate this in villages where everything can be made self-sufficient. This is important. It is wrong to leave the cows to graze anywhere and for people to throw their garbage anywhere they please. It is important to create this awareness. Do this seva. Use the strength that you get from your sadhana to do good for society.

394. I am confused about my career?

Sri Sri: Confusion is good, it indicates growth. Hold on to the confusion. Listen to your heart then suddenly something will click and you will know what to do.

395. I want to stay here and do seva in the ashram.

Sri Sri: I feel that the whole world is My Ashram. I don't think that the Ashram is limited to some boundaries. Ashram means, where you get three things. Some good knowledge, some good food and good rest for the body and mind. You can do this in your own home! Whoever comes to your home, talk some knowledge with them, and then you offer them so food and good rest. Make every home an Ashram. I want the whole world to be an Ashram. People in every corner of the world should stop talking about useless things and talk about knowledge. Clarity in mind, purity in heart and sincerity in action. We can do all these three things then your home will be an Ashram.

396. What can those do who want to work in villages?

Sri Sri: There are lots to do. We have now rejuvenated 14 rivers by Art of Living volunteers. There is work happening everywhere. Where the water level had gone down to 600-700 feet, it has now come up to fifty feet. They are also doing recharging wells. Where only the name of the river existed but not the river itself, now river is flowing there. I also tweeted about this.

People from Maharashtra came here and asked for rains and it rained in Maharashtra that very night. The strength that is there in prayer is tremendous. You have all experienced this. So have faith. A butterfly flaps its wings in South America and the impact of that is felt on the clouds in China. Are you less than a butterfly? If a butterfly can have that effect then you can do a lot more. Life is not fatalistic.

397. Guruji, is it important to repeat the Happiness Program?

Sri Sri: During any of our courses, what is visible is not the motive. On a subtle level, within your consciousness, there is a change related to those processes, those stories, those knowledge points and that is the reason you feel a change within your Self after the course. Just like in one of the process, sharing your Life Story is not the objective but what is happening actually is that you feel some lightness within. You get rid of deep life impressions that bother you. Similarly, there is something important related to each and every process, story and even your homework. The more you give into each, the more you get out of it.

Now what many of you think is - "Why go again and repeat all that we have gone through?", "We know what is being taught during the course", "We've already learnt Sudarshan Kriya and continue with our daily practice, then what's the point in repeating" and all such concept blemishes our intellect. I tell you, every time you repeat the course you'd find it absolutely new. Always! How many of the repeaters have had this experience? (Many in the audience raise their hands) It's not just you but the other participants as well because of whom you complete the course and every time there is a new lot of a participant which means it's all New level of Happiness.

Your experiences of Sudarshan Kriya get deeper everytime you repeat the course because everytime you come, you learn about the small mistakes that you make. Ujjai Breath still is a challenge for many and there are people who are not able to follow the Kriya Rhythm. Specially the faster circles. They are on their own breathing as fast as possible. No! Follow the Mantra - 'Sohum' precisely. It is very important. Your practice gets more towards perfection when you are corrected for your mistakes.

Similarly, many of you don't even remember how many layers we all are living on. Knowing and remembering about yourself is the most important aspect of our life else what's the

difference between you and a robot?

The Golden Keys shared with you during the course are the most precious as they are the crux of your life applicable in any situation, but at the same time they need repetitive hammering because once you are done with the course, over time, you start getting stained back in your normal life.

I suggest you all, including the teachers, keep repeating the Basic/Happiness Program at least once in 6 months. Get all the doubts out of your mind and just come and sit; I'll be there to welcome you. Have this faith!

398. Can our basic nature be changed by sadhana?

Sri Sri: It depends on what you consider your basic nature to be. If you say your basic nature to be anger, then I don't agree with that. The basic nature of Vata, pitta and kapha, keep changing. Then there is creativity, happiness, joy, belongingness; these are all a part of your basic nature.

Life is a combination of the changing and the non-changing. You cannot say everything changes and at the same time you cannot say that nothing changes. There are some things you can change and some things you cannot change in you, you have to accept both. Life is a balance between both. There are some things you cannot change and a lot of things that can change and with sadhana what happens is that the non- things become stronger and there is a faster transformation in the things that can change.

399. What completes life?

Sri Sri: It is in knowing life.

400. If life is a dream then that what is reality?

Sri Sri: Who told you life is dream? Whatever has happened till this moment is just a memory and there is no difference between memory and a dream. If you look at it from that perspective then whatever has happened till now is like a dream. When you have this knowledge, then something shakes inside and you are awakened, that is becoming conscious and this whole exercise is to become awakened and nothing else.

401. Why are we scared of being alone? Why are we always looking for company?

Sri Sri: Because you have not gone deep within. You have not met yourself. When you meet yourself, then that very moment all your fears in life will vanish and how do you meet yourself? You keep aside all your roles in life and ask yourself 'Who am I?' When you keep asking yourself this question and go deep in meditation then you will know what truth. Then all your fears, hatred, animosity towards will vanish in that moment. So this is good exercise to do, keep asking yourself 'Who am I?' You do this for 5-7 minutes everyday, and then your mind starts settling, then automatically you start becoming happy.

402. How do move to non-doership?

Sri Sri: Do not bring these differences into your mind as to what is doership and non-doership. Leave everything aside and do your work 100% and once you finish the work then you should rest also 100%. What we do is when we rest then we think about work and when we work we think about resting. So we are not able to rest or work properly.

403. I am not able to control my anger even after practicing meditation.

Sri Sri: Go deeper in meditation, do pranayama. It is impossible that even after practicing meditation your anger does not go. But if you still feel that it is there, look carefully and see that earlier when you would get angry, your anger would stay for longer. Now that you have started meditating, you get angry but it goes quickly within a few minutes.

First acknowledge that, which is a huge step. While earlier your anger would last for months, sometimes a year, but now it last for a few minutes of an hour at the most and why does it happen, because somewhere in the middle of your anger, you remember your breath, a flash of memory of your meditation comes and breaks your anger. Others may think that he is practicing meditation and still gets angry, but you know from inside that you have changed, that you have improved. Therefore whatever meditation you do will never go to waste.

404. Knowing that we will leave everything one day and go away, makes me very disturbed. How to come out of it?

Sri Sri: The temporary nature of things around you should enable you to calm down, settle down. It's good if it disturbs you; it wakes you up from slumber. But I tell you, hold on to it and you will see that another horizon opens up in front of you, where you feel invincible, where you feel that you are not a finite body but infinite consciousness.

405. I am very lazy in doing my practices, what should I do?

Sri Sri: What is the guarantee that if I give you some suggestion you won't feel lazy to implement that. I better keep my mouth shut! You know you can overcome laziness only through three things. Either through love or fear or greed. Out of fear, or out of the greed of getting 10 lakhs or crores, you get over laziness. Or third is when you have fallen in love with something then you overcome laziness.

406. Are inter-caste or inter-religion marriages wrong according to dharma?

Sri Sri: No. It is not the caste or religion, it is your compatibility. Don't, in an upsurge go and say, I can't live without you. Because when overcome with emotion you say I can't live without you, soon you will say, I can't live with you! It will flip over. That's why take the advice of elders also.

407. How do I know if I really love someone or it's just an attraction?

Sri Sri: Time will tell you. Ask them to behave tough towards you, and then you will know. If someone puts more demand on you, then you will know how much you really honour them.

408. How do I build an affinity towards knowledge?

Sri Sri: This very question indicates you already have it, my dear! Why do you keep looking for it? You already have it that is why you are asking this question. You imagine that you don't have affinity for knowledge and then you try to cultivate it, you know it's never going to happen.

Certain things you should assume and certain things you should know. You cannot assume everything and you cannot know everything. If someone says this is poison don't have it, you cannot say no I will first taste and make sure, then you will not be there! So somethings you have to believe, some things you have to know and make everyone your own and move ahead (kuch maan ke chalo, kuch jaan ke chalo, sabko gale laga ke chalo).

Many times people say that they will talk only to people that they know. That is stupidity, where is the benefit in that? There is benefit in talking to people who are not like you, your skills improve and your mind opens up. This tendency of sticking to one's concepts in our country is sign of backwardness. Like communists run away from religious people and the religious people shy away from atheists. This is according to me is a sign of weakness.

409. What is the mystery behind your beauty and attractiveness?

Sri Sri: There is a saying that beauty lies in eyes of the beholder! If you feel good inside then everyone else will also seem good. If you don't feel good inside then everyone looks like an enemy to you. It's the way you look at people. Yes of course when you come here, the way you look at everyone changes. If it doesn't then you are not you and I am not Me. This is what my job is! If spirituality were not attractive then why would people come on to this path? If there was no happiness here, then why would anyone bear being being on the path? There is some joy that people find on this path that is why they are on it, right? Nature has made it this way.

410. If everything is destiny then what is our free will?

Sri Sri: I have said already, your height is your destiny; your weight is your free will. If your weighing 100-200 kilos, don't say what I can do this is my destiny! Change your diet; we just keep eating at all odd hours like an elephant! Elephants sleep for only one hour and eat the rest of the 23 hours. But here even our elephants don't eat for so long, they rest for 4-5 hours. So pay attention to what you eat.

We keep stuffing ourselves with carbohydrates; rice, wheat, potatoes and we boil the vegetables and throw away the water, throwing away all the essential vitamins and minerals. We keep eating these non-nutritious foods. We should eat green vegetables and boil very little and not throw away the water. We have ayurvedic cooking classes, you should take these classes. We eat very salty and spicy food and then we get all sorts of diseases. We should learn to eat satvic meals, balanced diet.

We have not given enough importance to dieticians in our country. In the name of vegetables too we eat only potatoes, brinjals and tomatoes, which hardly have any nutrition in them. We have to change the way we cook. Like we should not add salt while cooking but only after the food is cooked. We should make a CD and circulate, what is alkaline and acidic food etc. Our diet is very acidic, which leads our blood being acidic which causes lot of diseases. Our blood should be alkaline.

411. Parents put a lot of pressure on children for being first in class. Please advice.

Sri Sri: That is a natural tendency, but don't put too much pressure on the kids, this we must tell them. Whatever percentage comes, we must tell them not to worry. You should give some of the top examples of people, great people in the country and elsewhere in the world, who were very mediocre in school, they did not get top ranks, but still they have excelled. You need to kindle the talent in the child and not put blame and pressure on the kids.

412. Why is Guru important for us?

Sri Sri: Why is this question important? You asked the question, you have become a student and if I answer I become a Guru!

413. Boys only look at beautiful girls. Are only looks important?

Sri Sri: I don't think so. You being is important enough. A person's existence is good enough; their looks and intelligence do not matter. You don't think about others you look at yourself. You focus on what talents are inside of you. Show other's your brilliance.

414. Parents keep calling us. How long are we supposed to bear this injustice?

Sri Sri: It is because of situation these days that they get worried. They call you only because they love you, why do you call it injustice? If you call it injustice, you will keep troubling yourself. Try and see from their perspective.

415. How can we be your masterpiece?

Sri Sri: You are already one. You are a peace of the Master. Go and spread it.

416. Why has sex become an obsession among teenagers?

Sri Sri: Yes, teenage is the time that you have to focus on your studies. If you are busy, your creativity will flow in the right direction, otherwise you will get addicted to sex. This is the time, this is the age that you have to be totally busy, be so busy that you hit the bed as soon as you come home and then become busy as soon as you get up!

417. I am suffering from a mental disorder; I have low dopamine level for which I am taking medicines. Can you suggest some remedy?

Sri Sri: So your medicines are working? (Yes) Then why do you say you are still suffering? See you should take it out of your mind. Medicines have worked, you are alright. You should say I am healthy now. You may have to take the medicine for a little longer, and slowly taper it off. You cannot suddenly leave it. Sing, dance, and serve, dopamine level will automatically go up. When you are selfish, dopamine disappears from the system. When you are loving, caring, serving, dopamine level increases. (I am also living alone) No, no, you are not alone. God is with you.

418. I don't have talent to build my business because of which my boss hits me hard about my past mistakes. Also I am not able to apply the course points. What do I do?

Sri Sri: First of all, don't think that you don't have talent. If boss is hard on you, you don't have to be hard on yourself. Here not only is your boss hitting you, you are also hitting yourself. You do to your capacity. Whatever you know with confidence, you do to your 100%. Don't be lazy, number one.

Second, don't think you cannot apply the course points. If you don't apply what is going to happen? You have no choice but to accept people, right? Then you meditate. Are you doing your meditation every day? (No). You have the medicine, but unless you use it, how will it work!

Every day you do meditation, listen to knowledge, and go to your boss with a smile. Whatever he says, doesn't take it to your heart. Take it from one ear and out the other. Like the knowledge you listen, you leave it easily! Why don't you listen to all that your boss says and take it out the other ear? Why do you keep it in your heart? And follow a discipline. You can't say that you can't follow any discipline. This you should not say. You should say, 'Yes, I'll be able to follow the discipline, I'll do my best'.



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